AN

ACCOUNT

OF THE

SOCIETIES

FOR

Reformation of Manners

In LONDON and WESTMINSTER,

And other Parts of the Kingdom.

WITH A

PERSUASIVE

TO

Persons of all Ranks,

TO BE

Zealous and Diligent in Promoting the Execution of the Laws againſt *Prophaneneſs* and *Debauchery*,

For the Effecting

A National Reformation.

LONDON,

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

SIR,

WE have peruſed the Book you ſent us, Entituled, *An Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners*; the *Deſign* of which is ſo truly Great and Noble, ſo much for the Honour of God, the Advancement of Piety and Virtue, and the publick Good both of Church and State, that it cannot fail of being approved by all good Men. The *Method* likewiſe propoſed, in order to the Promoting and Accompliſhing the ſaid Deſign, is, We conceive, moſt proper, and (by the Bleſſing of God attending it) moſt likely to prove effectual. Our Requeſt therefore is, That the ſaid Book

may

may be ſpeedily made Publick, and diſperſed into all Parts of the Nation, to the end that good Men of all Ranks and Qualities may be thereby excited to contribute their beſt Endeavours in their reſpective Places and Stations towards a *National Reformation of Manners.*

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An

An Account of the SOCIETIES FOR Reformation of Manners, IN LONDON and WESTMINSTER, And other Parts of the Kingdom, &c.

IT may be hoped, That this plain Diſcourſe will meet no other Enemies than ſuch as are likewiſe Enemies to *Religion* and *Virtue*, and are loſt to the Senſe of *Good* and *Evil*, ſince the only *Deſign* of it is evidently to promote the true Intereſt of *Religion*; and it does not oppoſe any one Man's honeſt Advantage, or encounter any common Opinion, that I know of, among us: The Obſervation having been long ſince made, That how many Diſputes ſoever there have been rais'd among the too various Denominations of Chriſtians, concerning *the Power of the Magiſtrate in Matters of Religion*, with reſpect either to *Faith* or *Worſhip*, it hath never been a Diſpute, whether *the Magiſtrate hath Power to Puniſh Immoralities:* The *Proſecution* of Men for their *Vices* hath never been reckoned *Perſecution*. It being as plainly the Duty of the *Magiſtrate*, from the Word of GOD, which obliges him to *Execute Wrath upon thoſe that do Evil*, as it is evident, from the diſmal *Rom.* 13. 4.

Effects of *Vice* and *Wickedneſs* in all Ages, that Laws againſt Prophaneneſs and Debauchery are neceſſary for the Preſervation of *Communities*, as that *Piety* and *Virtue* are requiſite to their Well-being; and that unreſtrained *Vice* and *Prophaneneſs* are as fatal to *Publick Societies*, as they are deſtructive to *Private Perſons*.

But though LAWS are neceſſary to the very Being of *Communities*, and *Good Laws* to their Happineſs; yet they cannot be ſuppoſed, by any Rational Man, to be any more ſufficient of themſelves, to procure the Welfare of the *Body Politick*, without a *due Execution*, than the beſt *Medicines* can procure the *Health* of the *Natural Body*, without the Uſe and Application of them.

If therefore the *Execution of Good Laws* be neceſſary, as is proved, to the Welfare of *Communities*; and thoſe that concern *Matters of Religion*, as do thoſe for the Puniſhment of *Prophaneneſs* and *Debauchery*, are allow'd, in a Chriſtian Country, to deſerve the greateſt regard, the Intereſt of *Religion* and the Welfare of the *Community* being ſo deeply concerned therein, it cannot be a matter of Diſpute, whether it becomes Men that call themſelves *Chriſtians*, to promote the *Execution* of ſuch *Laws*: Nay, it cannot be well imagined, how Men can have a *Zeal* for the Service of the Great GOD of Heaven and Earth, or can have a *due Love* to Mankind, who have no regard to the *Honour* of *God*, or *Welfare* of their *Country*; as ſhall hereafter more fully appear.

Now, what becomes all Men, in their ſeveral Capacities, to do, in the Promoting of the *Execution* of our *Laws* againſt Prophaneneſs and Debauchery, my Buſineſs, in the firſt place, is to ſhew is Practicable, and that it may be done by us of this Nation; and that not only from what was done ſome Years ago, in the Times of *Uſurpation*, but what hath been done within Eight Years paſt, in and about this City, and other Parts of the Kingdom.

It

It is very well known, That in the late times Prophane Swearing, Drunkenneſs, Open-Lewdneſs, and Prophanation of the Lord's-Day, were generally diſcouraged, and in a manner wholly ſuppreſſed. And it is as well known, to our Shame, that thoſe Sins have not only ſince revived among us, by reaſon of the Impunity of Offenders, the Countenance and Preferment they have met with, and the Contagion of great and ill Examples, but have been committed with the greateſt Impudence, and without Controul; without either Shame, or the Fear of the Laws; ſo that they were ſeen and heard at *Noon-Day*, and in our *Open Streets*; and as if we were reſolved to out-do the Impieties of the very *Heathens*, *Prophaneneſs*, and even *Blaſphemy*, was too often the Wit and Entertainment of our *Scandalous Play-Houſes*, and *Sincere Religion* became the Jeſt and Scorn of our *Courts* in the late Reigns.

And thus *Debauchery* diffuſed it ſelf throughout the whole Body of the Nation, till, at laſt, our *Morals* were ſo corrupted, that *Virtue* and *Vice* had with too many changed their Names; it was reckoned *Breeding* to *Swear*, *Gallantry* to be *Lewd*, *good Humour* to be *Drunk*, and *Wit* to deſpiſe *Sacred things*; and it was enough to have rendred one ſuſpected of *Phanaticiſm*, or an abjectneſs of Spirit, and a matter of Reproach, not to ſuffer ones ſelf to be carried away with this *Torrent of Wickedneſs*, and not to glory in thoſe *faſhionable Vices*. Nay, it was thought an unpardonable Rudeneſs, even for a *Clergy-Man* or *Magiſtrate*, to reprove or puniſh one that was Guilty of them, notwithſtanding the Solemn Obligations of their *Oaths* and *Vows* to do it. And even after the Acceſſion of His preſent Majeſty to the Crown, tho' *Popery* and *Oppreſſion* x immediately vaniſhed, *Immorality* and *Prophaneneſs* ſtill kept their ground, as if they expected an *Eſtabliſhment* with our *Liberties*, after ſo long and *Peaceable a Poſſeſſion*.

x Seemed

Reformation was indeed talkt of by ſome Perſons as an Excellent thing, and as a proper way of Expreſſing our

Thankfulneſs to Almighty God for his Mercies to this Nation, and to procure a Continuance of them to us, and to our Poſterity: But *Vice* was lookt upon as too Formidable an Enemy to be provok'd, and *Publick Reformation* was thought ſo difficult an Undertaking, that thoſe that gave it the beſt Words, judged it not ſafe to ſet about it in the time of War, whilſt there were ſo many in Arms on the other ſide; and therefore they declined the Thoughts of it till we ſhould ſee the End of the uncertain War we were ingaged in, tho' they were, I conceive, otherwiſe inſtructed by *God*'s expreſs Command to the *Jews*, *When the Hoſt goeth forth againſt thine Enemy, then keep thy ſelf from every evil thing.* When things were in this diſmal and almoſt deſperate State, it came into the Hearts, it ſeems, of *Five* or *Six* private *Gentlemen* of the *Church of England*, to engage in this difficult and hazardous Enterprize; who conſidering that the higher the Tide of Wickedneſs was, the more need there was of Oppoſing it; that our crying Sins were our greateſt Enemies, and moſt threatned our Ruin; that we have the Laws in Force againſt them; and that they ſhould have the Laws of *God*, with the Prayers of *good Men* on their ſide, reſolved, what-ever Difficulties they met with, to make their Efforts for Promoting the *Execution* of our Laws againſt *Prophaneneſs* and *Debauchery*, and the Suppreſſing of them by adviſable Methods.

Deut. 23. 9.

This was ſuch an Undertaking as we might well believe would ſoon alarm the Enemy, but which the *Patrons* of *Vice* would make no doubt to defeat, before any Progreſs could be made; and which the Prudent and Wiſe Men of the World, who rely on ſecond Cauſes, with too little regard to the firſt, the Almighty Creator and Governor of the World, *with whom*, as King *Aſa* expreſſes it in his Prayer, *It is nothing to help, whether with many, or with thoſe that have no power*, would look on with Pity, if not with Deriſion; and ſo it proved, that the Champions and Advocates of *Debauchery* put

2 Chron. 14. 10.

put themſelves in Array to defend their wretched and infamous Liberties; they ſet themſelves to Ridicule, to Defame, and to Oppoſe this Deſign, and to Overthrow the Hopes and Expectations of the Undertakers: And ſome others, whom in Charity we would not look on as Enemies of Religion and Virtue, tho' we cannot eaſily eſteem them our Friends, whoſe Conduct has ſo greatly obſtructed the Progreſs of this Deſign, conſulting Human Prudence, or rather Worldly Policy too much, and perhaps their own Obligations too little, were very forward to cenſure theſe Attempts as the Effect of an imprudent and an unſeaſonable Zeal: But notwithſtanding a furious Oppoſition from Adverſaries, the ill Offices of thoſe from whom better things might have been expected, and the unkind Neutrality of Friends, theſe *Gentlemen*, who in a little time began to add ſome others to their Number, not only kept their Ground, but made farther Advances; for our late Excellent QUEEN, of Glorious Memory, having this Affair laid before Her, in the Abſence of the King, by a Prelate of great Learning and Fame, (the preſent Lord-Biſhop of *Worceſter*) She had juſt Sentiments of it, and therefore thought it became Her to give it Countenance; She Graciouſly condeſcended to Thank thoſe who were concerned in it, and readily promiſed them Her Aſſiſtance; and afterwards, upon this Application made to Her Majeſty, She was pleaſed to ſend Her *Letter* to the *Juſtices of Middleſex*, commanding them to further theſe Proceedings all they could, as they were obliged by their *Oath*, as *Magiſtrates*, to do; and when there was further Occaſion, She ſhew'd She was in earneſt to promote this Deſign, by taking other more effectual Methods for that purpoſe. But as it may well be ſuppoſed, That the Queen's patronizing of theſe Endeavours could not but give Credit and Strength to them; ſo the Affair, by Her Death (it may as eaſily be imagined) muſt loſe a great Advantage: But yet the Loſs

(tho'

(tho' it appeared exceedingly great) did not diſcourage thoſe that were ingaged in this Enterprize. For as they firſt ſet about it with little or no Expectation of ſuch a Patroneſs, becauſe they thought it would be an acceptable Service to the King of Kings, and that it would promote the true Intereſts of *Religion*, and the Welfare of their *Country*: So the ſame Conſiderations obliged them to purſue their Deſign with equal Vigor and Zeal, tho' they were deprived of ſo great a Friend and Protector. And Divine Providence had by this time ſeemed to own and favour their Endeavours, by the great and remarkable Succeſs that had attended them; for Multitudes of Offenders had been by their means brought to Puniſhment. The *Publick Oppoſition* that was at firſt made to their *Undertaking* was broke through, (which the Lord-Biſhop of *Glouceſter* gave an Account of in his *Vindication* of it, which, it may be wiſhed, there may never be any further Occaſion to remember) and the Honeſty of it had recommended it to the Virtuous and Unprejudiced part of the Nation, whom the Account of theſe Matters had reached; the Enemy, after a ſevere Examination, having not been able to diſcover, that any *illegal Methods* had been uſed, or that any *ſecular Intereſt* was purſued by thoſe, who beſtow'd their *Time* and their *Pains* in carrying on ſo ungrateful and hazardous a Work, as that of *Reformation* will be always found, ſince it is the Oppoſing of ill Men, in their ſinful Indulgencies, which are often more deſirable to them than their very Lives. With theſe Encouragements they proſecuted their Buſineſs, increaſing their Number by the Addition of many Perſons of conſiderable Note, and of the beſt Characters, ſome of whom, tho' they were of different Opinions from thoſe of the *Eſtabliſh'd Church*, as to ſome points concerning *Religion*, were willing to unite their Strength in the common courſe of Chriſtianity, and engage in ſo Noble a Deſign, that had done ſo much Good: By whoſe *joint Endeavours*, great Advances have been continually

tinually made towards a *Reformation of Manners*, which is every Day getting ground, Persons of *various Ranks*, of *considerable Fortunes*, and of the *clearest Character*, continually offering Assistance to it, not only in and about the City of *London*, but from several parts of the Kingdom.

But since it hath been long desired, that a more distinct and clear *View* may be given to the World of this *Undertaking*, and of the *Advances* of it, which those that have been principally concerned in it (so industriously consulting Privacy) have not hitherto been prevailed on, by any Temptations, either of Vanity or Resentment, to make publick; being more desirous that it should be known by the *good Effects* it produces, than by any *History* or *Narrative*; I ask leave to present the World with a *short Scheme* of the *Design*, and some *Account* of the *Managers* of it, that the well-disposed part of the Nation that have hitherto been Strangers to it may, by the Knowledge thereof, be induced to join in so good a Work, and now especially, since this Conjuncture is so favourable to it, beyond our Expectation.

There is a very large Body of Persons, compos'd of the *Original Society* before-mentioned, with the Additions that have been since made of Persons of Eminency in the *Law*, *Members of Parliament*, *Justices of Peace*, and considerable *Citizens* of *London* of known Abilities and great Integrity, who frequently meet to consult of the *best Methods* for carrying on the Business of *Reformation*, and to be ready to advise and assist others that are already ingaged, or any that are willing to join in the same Design.

This *Society* is at a considerable Yearly Charge for the effectual managing their Business; but takes no Contributions of any but their own Members, by whose Endeavours, as was said before, Thousands of Offenders in *London* and *Westminster* have been brought to Punishment for *Swearing*, *Drunkenness*, and *Prophanation* of the *Lord's-Day*; and a great

great part of the Kingdom has been awakened, in ſome meaſure, to a ſence of their Duty in this reſpect, and thereby a very hopeful Progreſs is made towards a *General Reformation.*

A *Second Society* is of about *Fifty* Perſons, *Tradeſmen* and others, who have more eſpecially apply'd themſelves to the Suppreſſion of *Leudneſs*, by bringing the Offenders to legal Puniſhment: Theſe may have actually ſuppreſſed and rooted out about *Five Hundred Diſorderly Houſes*, and cauſed to be puniſhed ſome *Thouſands* of *Lewd Perſons*, beſides *Swearers*, *Drunkards*, and *Prophaners* of the *Lord's-Day*, as may appear by their *Printed Liſts* of Offenders. Theſe Perſons, by their prudent and legal Management of their Buſineſs, have received great Countenance and Encouragement in our *Courts of Judicature*, and very particular Encouragement and Aſſiſtance, for ſeveral Years paſt, from the *Lord Mayor* and *Court of Aldermen*, who are ſenſible of the great Service that is done by them, which they expreſs upon proper Occaſions.

A *Third Society*, is of *Conſtables*, who meet to conſider of the moſt Effectual way to diſcharge their *Oaths*, to acquaint one another with the *Difficulties* they meet with, to reſolve on proper *Remedies*, to divide themſelves in the ſeveral Parts of the City, ſo as to take in the whole to the beſt Advantage, for the inſpecting of *Diſorderly Houſes*, taking up of *Drunkards*, *Lewd Perſons*, *Prophaners* of the *Lord's-Day*, and *Swearers* out of the Streets and Markets, and carrying them before the *Magiſtrates*; and I muſt obſerve, that this is found a very adviſable and ſucceſsful Method for all *Conſtables* to take, for the Suppreſſing of the abominable Sin of Swearing, when *Private Perſons* are negligent in giving of *Informations*, and the *Magiſtrate* is careleſs of his Duty.

A *Fourth* Rank of Men, who have been ſo highly Inſtrumental in this *Undertaking*, that they may be reckoned a *Corner-Stone* of it, is of ſuch as have made it ſome part of their Buſineſs to give *Informations* to the *Magiſtrate*, as they have had Opportunity of ſuch Breaches of the Laws as were before-mentioned. Many of theſe Perſons have given the World a great and almoſt unheard of Example, in this corrupt Age, of *Zeal*, and *Chriſtian Courage*, having underwent, at the beginning (more eſpecially) of theſe Proceedings, many *Abuſes*, and great *Reproaches*, not only from exaſperated and hardened Offenders, but often from their luke-warm Friends, Irreligious Relations, and ſometimes from **ſhameleſs Magiſtrates**, by whom they have been Reviled, Brow-beaten, and Diſcouraged from performing ſuch important Service, ſo neceſſary to the Welfare of their *Country*. And herein theſe brave Men have acted with ſo great Prudence, as well as Zeal, that fore-ſeeing it might one day be the Policy of the Enemy of all Goodneſs, and the Buſineſs of wicked Men, who are his Inſtruments, and who could not generally be brought to Shame and Puniſhment for their infamous Practices but by their means, to raiſe Prejudices in the Minds of bad and unthinking People againſt them, and to diſparage their Proceedings, by whiſpering of Jealouſies of their being influenced in what they did by Worldly Conſiderations, That the World may be challenged to make appear, That any one of theſe *Societies* have been ſo much as treated with, by any Perſon whatſoever, to give *Informations* with any Promiſe of a Reward, or that they have ever received the leaſt Advantage by any *Convictions* upon theſe *Statutes* againſt *Prophaneneſs* and *Debauchery*, the Money ariſing thereby being wholly appropriated to the *Poor*, except the third part of the Penalty upon the *Statute* againſt *Prophanation* of the *Lord's-Day*, which, in ſome Caſes, the *Magiſtrate* hath a bare Power to diſpoſe of; but was never, that we know of, received by any one of theſe Perſons; which I

thought fit to obſerve, as a laſting Anſwer to any Objection of this kind, in Juſtice to them who have gone through *Frowns* and *Reproaches* for the ſake of doing ſo much Good, and that all Men may ſee with how great Reaſon it is, both from the Character of the Perſons concerned in the Diſcharging of this Service to *Religion* and their *Country*, as well as from the Nature and Neceſſity of it, (which I ſhall hereafter enquire into) that the Name of an *Informer* is now become much more *Glorious* among *wiſe* and *good Men*, than it was grown *Contemptible*, by the *ill Practices* of *ſome* in our days: And that it does therefore appear truly *Honourable* for Perſons of the *greateſt Quality* to give *Informations* in theſe Caſes, for the Service of the moſt *High God*, as ſome among us, of *greater Ranks* than the World does perhaps think of, have of late done, and which it hath been obſerved, in divers *Diſcourſes* lately Publiſhed, that even *Princes* under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation were not aſhamed to do. *Now when theſe things were done, the Princes came to me, ſaying, The people of Iſrael, and the Prieſts and the Levites have not ſeparated themſelves from the people of the Lands, doing according to their Abominations*, &c.

Ezra 9. 1, 2.

There are *Nine* other *regulated* and *mixt Bodies* of *Houſekeepers* and *Officers*, in the ſeveral Quarters of *London*, *Weſtminſter*, and *Southwark*, who *differ* in their *Conſtitution* from thoſe before-mentioned; but *agree* in the *Methods* of inſpecting the Behaviour of *Conſtables*, and other *Officers*, and going along with them, and aſſiſting them in their Searching of *Diſorderly Houſes*, in taking up of *Offenders*, and carrying them before the *Magiſtrate*, and alſo in giving *Informations* themſelves, as there is Occaſion.

Beſides thoſe before-mentioned, there are *Nine and Thirty Religious Societies* of another kind, in and about *London* and *Weſtminſter*, which are propagated into other Parts of the

the Nation; as *Nottingham*, *Glouceſter*, &c. and even into *Ireland*, where they have been for ſome Months ſince ſpreading in divers *Towns* and *Cities* of that Kingdom; as *Kilkenny*, *Drogheda*, *Mannouth*, &c. eſpecially in *Dublin*, where there are about *Ten* of theſe *Societies*, which are promoted by the *Biſhops*, and *inferior Clergy* there. Theſe *Perſons* meet often to *Pray*, *Sing Pſalms*, and *Read* the *Holy Scriptures* together, and to *Reprove*, *Exhort*, and *Edifie* one another by their *Religious Conferences*. They moreover carry on at their Meetings, Deſigns of *Charity*, of different kinds; ſuch as Relieving the *Wants* of *Poor Houſe-keepers*, maintaining their *Children* at *School*, ſetting of *Priſoners* at *Liberty*, ſupporting of *Lectures* and *daily Prayers* in our *Churches*. Theſe are the SOCIETIES which our late *Gracious Queen*, as the Learned *Biſhop* that hath writ her LIFE tells us, took ſo great *Satisfaction* in, that She inquired *often* and *much* about them, and was *glad* they went on and prevailed; which, thanks be to GOD, they *continue* to do; as the Reverend Mr. *Woodward*, who hath obliged the World with a very particular Account of the *Riſe* and *Progreſs* of them, hath lately acquainted us. And theſe likewiſe are SOCIETIES that have proved ſo exceedingly *Serviceable* in the Work of REFORMATION, that they may be reckoned a chief *Support* to it, as our late *Great Primate* Arch-Biſhop *Tillotſon* declar'd, upon ſeveral Occaſions, after he had examined their *Orders*, and inquired into their *Lives*, *That he thought they were to the Church of* England.

I might now give an *Account* of a *Society of Miniſters* of the *Church of England*, for carrying on of this *Work*; and another *Agreement* of all *Juſtices of the Peace*: But I am withheld at preſent by ſome Conſiderations from deſcending to any further *Particulars* concerning them; and muſt content my ſelf with ſaying what will be eaſily allow'd, That the

ſtated Meetings of ſuch Perſons are as *proper*, and may be more *uſeful* for the *Promoting* of this *Work*, than any other I have deſcrib'd. For what might we not expect from the *Zealous Endeavours* of theſe *Orders* of Men in this Affair? which, 'tis moſt obvious, will not be employ'd with ſo great Effect, as when they *form* themſelves into *Societies*, or, at leaſt, have *frequent* and *ſtated Times* of Meeting, for the *Proſecution* of this Buſineſs. 'Tis true, that *Miniſters* and *Magiſtrates* have far greater *Advantages*, as well as more particular *Obligations*, than others, (as I ſhall hereafter endeavour to make appear) to be ſerviceable in this Work of *Reformation*; but yet, when they act alone in this Contention between *Virtue* and *Vice*, tho' they will do great good in our preſent Circumſtances, and much more then they will eaſily believe till they are heartily engaged in it; yet they muſt expect to be under Diſadvantage on ſome Occaſions, as well as other ſingle Perſons, who exert their *Zeal* without a *Communication* with one another, and particularly when they encounter *Combinations* of wicked Men, which, it is not unlikely, will ſometimes happen. Do we not ſee by what Methods the *Men of the World* propagate *Wickedneſs*, and countermine *Good Deſigns*? Is it not by their *Clubs* and *Confederacies*? Are we not ſenſible with what Advantage our *Civil Concerns* are carried on by *Companies* and *Corporations*? Nay, Does not the Account before us convince us of the great *Uſefulneſs*, or rather *Neceſſity*, of Good Mens *confederating* and *meeting* frequently togerher to concert *Methods*, and *Encourage* one another in this difficult Work of Confronting and Suppreſſing of *bare-fac'd* and *inſolent Wickedneſs*? And that the Reaſon why *good Men* have not ſooner or more generally done it may be, becauſe *the Children of this World are in their Generation wiſer than the Children of Light*. Since therefore *Union* and *Method* ſeem evidently to give *good Men* much the ſame Advantage (abſtracting from the Conſideration of the Goodneſs of their

Mat. 16. 8.

their Cauſe, and the Divine Aid that they may expect) in their *Oppoſition* to *Prophaneneſs* and *Immoralities*, againſt the greater Number, 'tis to be feared, of the *Wicked*, as Diſcipline and good Ground in War gives a ſmall Body of Men againſt a very unequal Number of thoſe that are undiſciplin'd, and with diſadvantageous Ground; 'tis highly to be wiſhed, That not only *Societies* of *Miniſters* and *Magiſtrates*, but of all other *degrees* of Men, were ſet up in *Proſecution* of this *Deſign*, in all Parts of the Kingdom, more eſpecially in all *Towns*, *Cities*, and *Corporations*. And it may charitably be hoped, that there are but few, if any, ſuch Places, where there are not to be found *Three* or *Four* Perſons at leaſt, of one or other Denomination of *Chriſtians*, that have a *Zeal* for GOD and *Religion*, who may eaſily *form* themſelves into a *Society*, which may *enlarge* by degrees, and which will, probably ſpeaking, go a great way towards the Suppreſſing *Publick Diſorders* where they are; but may have a marvellous Effect, with *God*'s Bleſſing, for this End, where there is a *Magiſtrate* that makes a Conſcience of his *Duty*, or a *Miniſter* that incourages *Reformation*; as would be manifeſt to any that had obſerved in how ſhort a time, and to what a degree, *open Wickedneſs* hath been checkt, where a *zealous Miniſter* hath given himſelf the Trouble, I might rather have ſaid the Pleaſure of meeting ſometimes a *Society* of his *Pariſhioners*, to encourage their Zeal and Conſtancy in this *Work of Reformation*, even where the *Magiſtrates* have been either *open* or *ſecret Enemies* to it. The Advantages moreover are too many to be inſiſted on in this place, for the Exerciſing of our own *Graces*, and the Confirming our *Virtuous Diſpoſitions*, by our *Aſſociating* with our *Fellow Chriſtians* for the Carrying on *Religious Deſigns*, in an *Age* when *Chriſtian Converſation*, which hath an ineſtimable Value with *Men* of *Religion*, is with ſuch Difficulty met with. The forming therefore of *Good Men* into ſuch *pious Combinations*,

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for the over-balancing thoſe of *Vice*, the countermining the contrary *Attempts* of all *wicked Men*, and recovering the *Power*, as well as *Form* of *Religion*, is moſt earneſtly recommended to all the Friends of *Piety* and *Virtue*. And methinks it may be expected from all, that have any ſincere regard to *God's Honor*, their *own* and their *Country's Happineſs*, that they ſhould exert themſelves in their ſeveral Capacities, with a noble *Zeal* and *Emulation* for the *Perfecting* of this great *Undertaking*. And now eſpecially the *Times of Peace* are returned, which we have been told, are the Times of *Reformation*, ſurely none that carry the Face of Chriſtians can with Confidence offer new Excuſes any longer to poſt-pone it; we may now hope for the Aſſiſtance of ſome, at leaſt, of the *Cautious* and *prudent Men* amongſt us, who have hitherto, with great *Gravity* and *Wiſdom*, ſtood *Neuters* in this Affair, and that they will at laſt anſwer the Expectation of Good Men from them, and ſuffer the Generations to come to call them Bleſſed. 'Tis at leaſt to be hoped, that if they are too *Great* and *Wiſe* to *ingage* in the *Work* themſelves, they will not, however, *obſtruct* it more than the *open Enemies* of it can do, by their calling it an *Impracticable Undertaking*, whiſpering groundleſs *Jealouſies* of the Deſign, or uncharitable and diſadvantageous *Characters* of the *Perſons* concerned in the Promoting it; but rather, that they will let the World ſee that their *Zeal* is ingaged in the Carrying on of *wiſer Methods*, for the Effecting of a *National Reformation*. And one would think, that the Employing our *Labour* or *Authority* in this *Noble Deſign*, of being *Inſtrumental* in doing Good to Multitudes of Souls, by Suppreſſing of *National Sins*, and, by conſequence, the Reviving the Power and Reputation of *Religion*, and thereby Preventing *National Judgments*, ſhould be more worth the *Concern* and *Application* of Chriſtians, and ſhould afford a more true and ſolid Satisfaction than the purſuit of our Worldly Intereſt or Pleaſures.

All

All indeed are not *Capable* of being *Serviceable* in the ſame way; but whether it be by *Executing the Laws*, or by *Preaching*, *Diſcourſing*, *Writing*, *Informing*, *Setting up of Societies*, or otherwiſe contributing towards it, which way ſoever it be that we can further this *Glorious Work*, it will, I think, be hard to find a good Excuſe for any that ſhall decline their Concurrence, according to their Advantages and Opportunities, in an Undertaking which it would become the greateſt Man upon Earth to promote, which is now ſo far facilitated by the *Schemes* that are laid, and the *Methods* it is put into.

We have ſeen ſome *few Perſons* ingaging in this *Enterprize*, before they had any *Methods* to direct them, or *Examples* to incourage them, encountring *Oppoſition* in the firſt *forming* their Deſign, from *open Enemies* and *falſe Friends*, ſuffering cruel *Mockings*, unkind *Cenſures*, and unjuſt *Reproaches*, and yet not *giving way*. We have ſeen them ſurmounting their *greateſt Difficulties*, ſo that the main brunt is now near over, and going on with that *Reſolution* and *Succeſs*, that the *Deluge* of *publick Wickedneſs* is viſibly abated. We are told, that many *Thouſands* have been brought to Puniſhment for *Swearing* and *Curſing*, by their means; *Seventy* or *Eighty Warrants* a Week having been executed on theſe Offenders, in and about this City only, ſince the late *Act of Parliament* againſt Swearing and Curſing was made, which hath given ſo great and remarkable a Check to thoſe *Scandalous Sins*, that our *Conſtables* ſometimes of late have found it difficult to take up a *Swearer* in divers of our *Streets* and *Markets*, where, within a few years paſt, *horrid Oaths*, *Curſes*, and *Imprecations*, were heard Day and Night; that a multitude of *Drunkards*, and *Prophaners* of the *Lord's-Day*, ſome of whom kept, as it were, *open Markets* within a few Years paſt, have been made *Examples* by their means; that *Hundreds* of *Diſorderly Houſes*, which were little better than Stews and Neſts for *Thieves*, *Clippers* and

and *Coiners*, &c. have been rooted out and ſuppreſſed; and that ſome *Thouſands* of *Lewd Perſons* have been *Impriſoned*, *Fined*, and *Whipt*; ſo that the *Tower-End* of the Town, and many of our *Streets*, have been much purg'd of that *peſtilent Generation* of Night-Walkers, that uſed to *infeſt* them, which were a *Reproach* to this *Noble City*, and a *Scandal* to *Chriſtianity*; *Forty* or *Fifty* of them having been ſent in a Week to *Bridewell*, where they have of late received ſuch *Diſcipline*, that a conſiderable Number of them hath choſe rather to be Tranſported to our *Plantations*, to work there for an honeſt Subſiſtance, than to expoſe themſelves, by their lewd way of Living, to *Shame* and *Puniſhment*, to *Poverty* and *Diſeaſe*, to all ſorts of wicked Practices, and the Danger of the *Gallows*, to which, in the Concluſion, they are often, if not generally brought. And I may juſtly add, that far *greater Things*, by the Application of the *Original Society* of *Gentlemen*, have been accompliſhed, than what have yet been mentioned, and ſuch as I am not permitted at this time to diſcover. But thus much may be ſaid, That the *Endeavours* of thoſe *Gentlemen* have not been confined to this *City* and *Kingdom*, but have extended as far as *Ireland*, where they have had an Influence, very little, I think, to the Honour of that Kingdom from whence it had its *firſt Riſe*, of which, ſince a more particular Account may be expected, I may ſatisfie my ſelf, at preſent, with ſaying in general, of my own Knowledge, That the *Tranſactions* of *Reformation* here having been near *Two Years* ſince laid before ſome few Perſons in *Ireland*, and moſt of thoſe (I muſt again obſerve) *private Perſons*, and of the *lower Rank* of Men, with proper Conſiderations to move 'em to unite in the ſame *Deſign*, and *Methods* to purſue it with Advantage, it determined them to engage heartily in it; and they have proſecuted it with ſo much Vigour, that there are now *ſeveral Societies* for *Reformation* in the City of *Dublin*, which I am aſſured, by divers Accounts that I have

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in my Hands from thence, are ſpreading into ſeveral Parts of the Kingdom, and are encouraged by his Excellency the Earl of *Golloway*, one of the *Lords Juſtices* of *Ireland*, the Right-Reverend the *Arch-Biſhop* of *Dublin*, the Generality of the *Clergy*, and the beſt of the *Magiſtrates* and *Gentlemen* of that City: In *One* of which *Societies*, moſt of the *Pariſh-Miniſters* of *Dublin*, ſeveral of the *pious Biſhops*, particularly the celebrated *Arch-Biſhop*, and divers other *Perſons of Quality*, are Members, ſome of whom have ſhewn a *Zeal*, which if it prevailed the *Three Kingdoms* over, might ſoon produce a Glorious Reverſe of the State they are now in, and which in leſs than *Two Years* ſpace hath ſucceeded, tho' not without Oppoſition, as might be expected, from Combinations of bad Men, to that degree in *Dublin*, that the *Prophanation* of the *Lord's Day*, by *Tipling* in *publick Houſes*, by Exerciſing of *Trade*, and Expoſing of *Goods* to Sale, is almoſt ſuppreſt; that *Lewd Women* are ſo ſtrictly enquired after, and ſeverely puniſhed, that they have Tranſported themſelves, as in *England*, to our *Plantations*; and that *Swearing* is ſo run down, that an *Oath* is rarely heard in their *Streets*; ſo that *publick Diſorders* are remarkably cured; and, in ſhort, *Vice* is afraid and aſhamed to ſhew its head, where within a few Years paſt it was daring and triumphant.

We are likewiſe aſſured, That *Scotland* hath concurred in theſe *Matters*, their *ſevere* and *juſt Laws* againſt *Prophaneneſs* and *Debauchery* having been put in Execution in an exemplary manner, purſuant to His Majeſty's *Proclamation*, which hath been there iſſued out in very ſtrict Terms. So that His Majeſty's late Gracious *Letter* to the *Parliament* of that Kingdom takes notice of the Progreſs that they have made in the *Forming* of *Methods* for the Diſcouraging of *Vice* and *Irreligion*, and aſſures them, *That 'tis a WORK moſt acceptable to him.*

But to return to our *own Nation.* We are made acquainted, That many *Societies* and *Bodies* of Men, of different *Ranks* and *Perſwaſions*, are ingaged in this Work, to which Men of *Virtue*, of *Temper*, and *unblemiſhed Reputation*, may either *join* themſelves, according to their *Quality*, *Circumſtances*, or *Opportunity*, or may *form* themſelves into *new Bodies:* That the *publick Oppoſition* that was made to it, which our Poſterity may bluſh to read of, is at an end, which, 'tis to be hoped, will be the laſt that we ſhall hear of in a *Chriſtian State*, and under a *Proteſtant Government:* That the *City* of *London* eſpouſes it, where there are *Two Sermons* Quarterly Preached, and divers of them Printed, to make Men ſenſible of their *Obligations* in this reſpect. And it's true alſo, That *Swearing* is much leſſened, as we have reaſon to believe, by the *Accounts* we receive in moſt, if not in all Parts of the Kingdom, as other *publick Diſorders* are in many; and that *Societies* for *Reformation* have been in divers Places already actually form'd, and are going on in many others; as particularly in *Glouceſter*, *Leiceſter*, *Coventry*, *Shrewsbury*, *Bridgewater*, *Hull*, *Nottingham*, *Tamworth*, *New-Caſtle*, *Leverpool*, *Cheſter*, and ſeveral other *Corporations*; ſo that in a few Months time, by the *Methods* that are now taking, there is reaſon to believe that we ſhall hear of a very *conſiderable Progreſs* in this Work from all Parts of the Nation. And now is this a Time for Men that would be reckoned *Chriſtians* to ſtand *Neuters* in an Affair wherein their *Religion*, their *Country*, and their *Poſterity*, are ſo deeply concerned? Let the Men who can contentedly ſee the *Laws* of GOD trampled upon, who can, in their ordinary Converſation in the Streets, and even at their own Tables, hear horrid *Oaths* and *Curſes*, nay, Men calling upon GOD for Damnation upon themſelves and others; in a word, offering high *Indignities* to the Glorious *Majeſty* of their Great *Creator*, conſider whether the very *Heathens*, who would not ſuffer their *Artificial*

Deities

Deities to be affronted, or their *Religion* to be deſpis'd, who in Sieges, and other Diſtreſſes from their Enemies, were more concerned for their Images and Altars than for their own Houſes, or private Affairs, does not condemn them? Let our Learned Rabbies, the great Diſputers of the World, and all that make a Profeſſion of Religion, but give little better account of it than by expreſſing a fierce and uncharitable heat againſt thoſe that differ from them in ſome things relating to Religion, but not eſſential to it, and wherein all Men equally wiſe and good have, I doubt, never yet been fully agreed, think ſeriouſly with themſelves, after a long and ſad Experience of their unhappy Conduct, whether they might not employ ſome ſhare at leaſt of their Parts and Zeal to much better purpoſe, in furthering the *Reformation* of Mens Lives, and of the *Manners* of the Nation, by the Suppreſſing of *Prophaneneſs* and *Vice*, than by raiſing or keeping up, with an unchriſtian Temper, to the manifeſt Injury of the Chriſtian Religion, which is an Inſtitution of Love, dangerous or unneceſſary *Controverſies* or *Diviſions*, and making of Proſelytes to their New Opinions or Party; all Religions being, I think, agreed, that *bad Men* are a Scandal to the beſt Religion, and that they cannot, if they continue ſo, be ſaved in any, and conſequently that the being inſtrumental in the bringing over of a few Souls to the ſincere Practice of Piety and Virtue by any Chriſtian Methods, which thoſe I am treating of will, I hope, be allowed to be, is of greater Service to the Chriſtian Religion, and the World, than the gaining of Hundreds that are vicious to any particular Church or Party. But can Men of Conſcience ſatisfie themſelves with complaining of the Iniquities of the Age, and wiſhing for *Reformation*, with giving only ſome *good Words* to theſe *Proceedings*, or even praying for *God's Bleſſing* upon them, without doing, as they have Opportunity, what is neceſſary to *promote* them, when, as it hath been ſaid, we have the

Laws of GOD, of the *Nation*, and, as we have reaſon to hope, the *Government* on *our* ſide; and moreover, ſo many *Examples*, and ſo great *Succeſs*, to incourage us, and have now, generally ſpeaking, not much more to fear than Calumnies and hard Words, and moſt of thoſe, 'tis to be hoped, from the Enemies of *God* and *Goodneſs*, which the beſt of *Men*, and the beſt *Deſigns* in all Ages, have ever met with, and which, in ſuch a Caſe, it is our *true Glory* to ſuffer? No, ſurely this is a *Time*, as I ſhall endeavour to make appear, for all *good Men* to join their *Hearts* and *Hands*, their *Intereſt* and *Authority*, in this ſo *Neceſſary*, ſo *Great*, and ſo *Glorious* a *Work*.

Having now laid before the *Reader* a ſhort Scheme of this *Undertaking*, which was begun with great Oppoſition, in a *Time* that was very diſcouraging to ſuch an Enterprize, and with ſuch other circumſtances of Diſadvantage as new things, be they never ſo wiſe and good, eſpecially Attempts of this kind, generally meet with, and yet hath been advanced to ſuch a conſiderable degree, from ſo contemptible a Beginning, as it muſt appear to have had to the Wiſe and the Wary among us, who do not duly conſider that there is a GOD that rules in the Kingdoms of Men, and
Iaiah 40. 29. who, as the Prophet expreſſes it, *Giveth Power to the faint, and to them that have no Might encreaſeth Strength.* My next Buſineſs is to enquire, whether there are any *Orders of Men* among us, who are under more *particular Obligations* to be *Zealous*, and diligent in Promoting a *publick Reformation of Manners*.

And, in the firſt place, I humbly ask leave to lay this Matter before the moſt Reverend Order of the *Clergy*, beſeeching them, with all that due Reſpect which all good Men ought to have to their *High and Holy Function*, to conſider, if what is endeavoured to be proved to be the *Common Duty* of *all Men*, and the *Special Obligation* of *Kings*, *Governours*,

Governours and *Magiſtrates*, be indeed ſo, it is not the *particular Province* of thoſe, who have entred into the Places of *Overſeers* and *Watchmen*, and of whom the Blood of thoſe that die in their Sins, if they knowingly ſuffer them to ſleep in them, will be required, to teach and inculcate *theſe Duties* as well as others. And if any of their Body, after this matter is plainly laid before them, and they are convinced 'tis their Duty to be diligent in the furthering it, wilfully neglect to excite all ſorts of People, eſpecially all belonging to their Charge, of what Rank or Quality ſoever, to do their Duty likewiſe in promoting, in their reſpective Stations, the *Execution of the Laws* againſt *Prophaneneſs* and *Debauchery*, they can give a good Account of their Conduct to thoſe of their particular Charge, who have no concern to diſcharge their Duty herein, only for want of their being admoniſhed of it, and are not Partakers, in ſome degree, in the *Common Guilt* of the *Nation*, which, as our Neglect of our Duty in this particular Inſtance, of not Promoting a *Reformation*, will encreaſe, ſo it may be a means, notwithſtanding our preſent reſpite from Deſtruction, to *draw down* God's Judgments upon the Kingdom, if we continue to make no better uſe of the Peace we have with our Neighbours than to fight with our crying Enormities againſt our God, which as I think few Nations, if any, have had in theſe laſt Ages greater Reaſon to dread, ſo, I ſuppoſe, all will grant, that none ſeem to have greater reaſon to uſe all proper means to prevent than thoſe who expect to give Account, not only for their own Sins, but for the Sins of ſo many others beſides, if they wilfully ſuffer them to periſh in them by their refuſing to uſe the neceſſary means of preventing their living and dying in them.

I ſhall not, after I have humbly repreſented this Affair to this Sacred Order, think fit to enquire, whether there hath been any Neglect on the part of their Body, or any one Member

Member of it, in a matter wherein *Religion* is ſo highly concerned: I ask leave rather to ſay, That I am aſſured, upon unqueſtionable Information, that moſt of the Right Reverend the *Biſhops* have expreſſed their *Approbation* of the *Societies of Reformation* I have given an Account of; that I have never heard of the Name of any one of theſe Reverend Perſons that hath not done it upon an *humble Application* made to them for their *Countenance* and *Encouragement* of them; and that divers of them, to my own certain Knowledge, have promoted them, and continue to do it, as a conſiderable Number of the *Clergy* in and about this City, as well as in other parts of the Kingdom, have done likewiſe; ſome of them by *Preaching*, and frequently *meeting* to conſult one another upon this Occaſion; and others of them by giving *Informations* themſelves to the *Magiſtrates* againſt *Prophane* Perſons; among whom the generous and remarkable Aſſiſtance that was given in this Affair by the two late Eminent Divines, Dr. *Horneck* and Dr. *Jekell*, whoſe Deaths are ſo much lamented, under the various Obſtructions and Diſcouragements they encountred in the Proſecution of it, which thoſe pious Men made ſuch diſmal Reflections upon, as I ſhall under our preſent Circumſtances forbear to repeat, does demand a particular Acknowledgement in this place, and deſerves to be tranſmitted to after-Ages, when the Names of ſuch as diſcourage *Endeavours* of *Reformation* may either be forgot, or be remembred with Ignominy. And I not only ſubmit what I have ſaid on this Head of the *Clergy*, and this whole *Diſcourſe*, to this *Reverend Body*, which, I think, I ſhall never obtain of my ſelf to Publiſh without the Approbation of ſome of the pious Members of it; but out of a juſt ſenſe of my own Defects, and the tender Regard I would always have to matters of *Religion*, I heartily deſire, if I am ever prevailed on to Publiſh it, a *publick Correction* from them of any thing I have ſaid in theſe Papers through

Weakneſs

Weakneſs or Inadvertency; which, I hope, all the Advantages of the World would not have prevailed on me, if they could have been offered me, to have ſaid knowingly, that may not be warranted from the *Holy Scriptures*, or that does give Offence to any but thoſe whom the Repreſentation of their Sin, or their Duty to them, and *Religion* it ſelf offends; whoſe Sentiments of this Diſcourſe as I have no reaſon to ask, their Cenſures of it I may know how to value.

And I muſt the rather make this *humble* and *ſolemn Addreſs* to them for a ſpeedy *Cenſure* of theſe *Papers*, if there is any juſt Occaſion for it; and that at the ſame time they would be pleaſed to put this *Glorious Cauſe*, that I have here repreſented with no more skill, in a better light, which, I conceive, would well become the moſt *celebrated Writers* of the Age to do, not only becauſe *Errors* in general, as well as *Diſeaſes*, are better prevented than cured after they are ſpread; but becauſe upon a long Conſideration and a full Knowledge I have had of the *Undertaking* I have treated of, and of the *Steps* by which it hath been carried on from the very Beginning, I cannot but believe that the Virtuous part of the Nation, when it is laid before them, will conclude that there is abundant Reaſon for their Concurrence and Aſſiſtance in it, and will think that either the *Happineſs* or *Miſery* of this Kingdom may with great ground be expected from either the *Succeſs* or the *Diſcouragement* that theſe and others *pious* and *juſt Endeavours* for a *National Reformation* meet with. My Buſineſs in the next place is to conſider the *Magiſtrates Obligation* to be diligent in the *Execution of the Laws* againſt *Prophaneneſs* and *Debauchery*.

It will, I think, be allowed, That *Government* is of *Divine Appointment*, and that the *Power* of *Magiſtrates*, whether it be that of the *Supream*, or that of thoſe that are *Inferior* and *Subordinate*, is derived originally from God. St. *Paul* ſpeaking of the *Magiſtrate* ſays, He *is the Miniſter of God* Rom. 13 4.

Rom. 13. 1. *God to thee for Good. There is no Power but of God. The Powers that be are ordained of God.* And *Moſes* ſpeak-
Deut. 1. 16, 17. ing to the Judges of the People of *Iſrael* ſays, *Hear the Cauſes between your Brethren, and Judge righteouſly between every Man and his Brother. Ye ſhall not reſpect Perſons in Judgment, but you ſhall hear the Small as well as the Great; you ſhall not be afraid of the Face of Man, for the Judgment is*
2 Chron 19. 6. *Gods. Take heed* (ſaith *Jehoſhaphat* to his Judges) *what ye do; for ye judge not for Man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the Judgment. Wherefore now, let the Fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it: for there is no Iniquity with the Lord our God, nor reſpect of Perſons, nor taking of Gifts.*
Ver. 9. *Thus ſhall ye do in the Fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect Heart.* From whence we may, I think, conclude, without adding any further proof of what is ſo generally confeſt, that *Magiſtrates* do act by *God*'s Authority, are his Miniſters or Inſtruments, which he maketh what uſe of he pleaſes in the Governing the Natural and Rational World; that they are to Act for his *Honour*, and the *Good* of his People; and that He will call them to account for
1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. their Behaviour in this reſpect. Accordingly, *for Kings, and for all that are in Authority*, the Apoſtle does particularly direct, *That Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions, and giving of Thanks be made, that under them we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.* For our *King* therefore, and all ſort of *Magiſtrates*, does it not behove us to pray, That *God* would be pleaſed to inſpire them with Zeal for his Glory, and the Good of his People, and particularly to direct and aſſiſt them in this neceſſary and moſt weighty Affair of *Reformation*?

And as the *Magiſtrate's Power* is primarily and originally from G O D; ſo is the *Office* and *Power* of *Subordinate Magiſtrates* immediately and viſibly conferred upon them as a *weighty Truſt*, by their *Prince*, and their *Countrey*, which they have an Obligation to the faithful Diſcharge of, in that natural

natural *Allegiance* and *Fidelity* which they owe to their *King* and their *Countrey*; but this *Obligation* riſes yet higher; they are bound yet cloſer to the faithful Diſcharge of their *Office* by a *Solemn Oath*, relating to their *particular Truſt*, as well as by the *Oath of Allegiance*. Now the *Obligation* being thus great and various, muſt, I think, neceſſarily draw the dreadful Guilt of *Perjury*, as well as *Breach of Truſt*, upon thoſe, who being thus intruſted and obliged to *Execute the Laws*, do wilfully neglect to do their *Duty*: For a *Juſtice of the Peace* takes this *Solemn Oath* at his Entrance into that *Office*:

That in the County of — in all Articles in the King's Commiſſion to him directed, he ſhall do legal Right to the Poor, and to the Rich, after his Cunning, Wit, and Power, and after the Laws and Cuſtoms of the Realm, and the Statutes thereof made; and wherein he is firſt obliged *to do Right*, which regards very much the Puniſhment of Offenders, as appears more fully in his *Commiſſion*; and this Equally reaches *Rich* and *Poor*. The *whole County* is aſſign'd in the *Oath*, as the Extent of his Juriſdiction, and therefore his *Authority* is not confin'd to a part; he is not tied up to act only in any leſſer Diſtrict of it; but is to iſſue out his *Warrants* againſt Offenders upon Informations offered him by Perſons that live never ſo remote from him in the County, or for Offences committed in any part of it; which, tho' 'tis ſo obvious from the very Words both of the *Oath* and *Commiſſion*, I thought fit to take notice of, leſt if we ſhould have any *Magiſtrates* that ſhould think it too much to give themſelves the Trouble to look into the Diſorders of any kind that are committed, even in their own Pariſhes, to ſuppreſs them when they hear or obſerve them any where elſe, as *Swearing* and *Curſing*, for Inſtance, in *Bowling-Greens*, *Coffee-Houſes*, and other publick Places; *Drunkenneſs*, *Lewdneſs*, and *Prophanation* of the *Lord's-Day* in the *Taverns* and *Streets*; or that ſhould unwillingly receive Informations from others of

them, they ſhould, in either of theſe Caſes, be tempted to think thoſe *worthy Magiſtrates* too officious, and take the Liberty to ſpeak of them as ſuch, who by inſpecting into theſe Diſorders, where-ever they hear of them, in any part of the County, and by giving Encouragement to thoſe that bring them Informations of ſuch Offences which will in conſequence draw a more than ordinary Attendance upon them of ſuch Perſons on this Occaſion as live at a diſtance from them, will thereby make their Unfaithfulneſs in their *Office* the more remarkable. He is obliged to *do Juſtice, according to the Laws, Statutes, and Cuſtoms of the Realm.* He is not then to break the Laws himſelf, or to ſuffer others with Impunity to break them. He is to diſcharge his *Office* according to his *Underſtanding* and *Ability*; but can any be ſuppoſed to be of ſuch weak Abilities, as not to know that Offenders ought to be puniſhed, when *legal Informations* are offered them, or when *Offences* are committed before them? If then any *Magiſtrates* can diſcourage thoſe who are ſo much Friends to their Countrey, as to bring them Informations againſt Offenders, can refuſe to convict upon them, or can ſee and hear one another break *God's Laws*, and the *Laws* of their *Countrey*, at their Diverſion, and their own Tables; What is more directly contrary to their *Office* and *Truſt*? What becomes of the *Oaths* that are upon them? In how many Inſtances do they notoriouſly break them? And if the Violation of a ~~*publick*~~ *Truſt* is juſtly eſteemed baſe and deteſtable, how much higher Aggravations muſt their Offences admit of, who break a *Publick one*, ſo ſolemnly taken upon them? And certainly *Perjury*, that is of ſo black a nature in its ſelf, is not a leſs Enormity, or leſs Infamous, in a Magiſtrate, than it is in one of an inferior Order.

The Commiſſion for a Juſtice of the Peace alſo ſets forth, *That he is to Conſerve the Peace in ſuch or ſuch a County, and to keep, as well as cauſe to be kept, all Ordinances and Sta-*

tutes

tutes made for the Good of the Peace, and the Conservation thereof, and for the Quiet, Rule and Government of His Majesty's People, and in all and every the Articles thereof, according to the Force, Form, and Effect thereof, to Chastise and Punish all Persons in the said County offending against the Form of these Ordinances and Statutes, or any of them in the County.

It deserves our Observation, That as the * *Roman* Government, the † *Lacedæmonian* and * *Athenian* Common-Wealths, provided by their Laws against *ill Magistrates*, kept, when they flourished, vicious Men out of their *Magistracy*, and entrusted those with the *Execution of their Laws* that would shew such a Behaviour to others as they expected from them. So our Government hereby strictly requires the *Magistrates* to give a *good Example*. 'Tis a mighty force that Example hath; one can hardly conceive any thing, on the one hand, so foolish and unaccountable; and on the other, so difficult and brave, as that Men may not in a great degree be led to by it. *Good Example* hath often the Advantage of Humane Precept, of Admonition, or Reproof, and sometimes of the Exercise of publick Justice, or private Authority, which, besides that they are not always practicable, have often too little Influence upon the Mind; but *Good Example* hath a great and secret Charm to draw others to Imitation. It attracts and assimilates by a Power of which we cannot give a full Account, tho' by shewing Virtue as it were visibly, it hath undeniably thereby a great Advantage of other Methods of Instruction; those things being allowed to make a much deeper and longer Impression upon our Minds that are represented to us by our Eyes, than those that are admitted by our Ears.

* Is ordo vitio careto, cæteris specimen esto. Præclara ista lex (ait *Cicero*) nam cum omni vitio carere lex jubeat, ne veniet quidem in eum ordinem unquam vitii particeps, *Lib. de Legibus, p.* 334.

† Virtus in primis apud Lacedæmonios circa Magistratus legendos semper spectata, quod Politicum præceptum in quavis Republica servari ex usu esset, *Nic. Cragius de Repub. Lacedæmoniorum p.* 82, 83.

* Inter præcipuos Atheniensium Magistratus censendi sunt annui Novemviri. Oportebat in eorum vitam inquiri, antequam Magistratum capesserent, *Petitus de Legibus Atticis* 236. Tantam honestatis curam his Novemviris voluit esse *Solon*, ut si quis Archon vino se ingurgitaverit, capital ei fuerit ex hac lege, Τῷ ἄρχοντι μὲν μεθύων λήφθῃ θάνατος ἔστω ἡ ζημία. Jurabant in leges se esse observaturos Novemviri, Jurisjurandum Novemvirorum. Leges observabo, quod si secus fecero auream statuam meam æqui ponderis pendam. *Petitus de Legibus Atticis* 190. Ἄρχοντες ὀμνύουσι δικαίως ἄρχειν, καὶ δῶρα μὲν λήψεσθαι, &c. *Heracl. Pont. de Politiis Atheniensium.*

 Precepts,

Precepts, tho' they are in the general not only highly uſeful, but neceſſary, are not always clear, and when they are underſtood, the Efficacy of them, of *Admonition*, and *Reproof*, ſeems often to be more or leſs according to the Example of them that give them; ſuch Perſons are lookt on as a Reproach to Religion, and unqueſtionably do often give bad Men a further Averſion and Prejudice to it, that do not practiſe themſelves what they recommend in their Diſcourſes. As the *Chriſtian Religion* does therefore ſtrictly oblige all its Proſelytes to ſhew a good Example, by a ſtrict Obſervance of its Precepts; ſo it does more eſpecially inculcate upon thoſe whoſe particular Office it is to teach others their Duty, their endeavouring to perſwade them to it by their own good Example, as well as by their Doctrine, *that they may thereby both ſave themſelves, and thoſe that hear them*; and when this is wanting, *when they ſay, but do not*, how exceedingly miſchievous the conſequences of it are, highly deſerves ſerious Conſideration. The Heathen Moraliſts could obſerve the great Miſchief that was done the World by Mercenary Maſters of Precept, *by whom they meant thoſe that endeavoured to talk elegantly of juſt things, but not to do them; and that it was not the Diſcourſes, but the Example of *Socrates*; not the School, but the Manners of *Epicurus*, that made *Plato*, *Methrodorus*, &c. what they were, and ſo much celebrated. *I knew* (ſays *Plato*) Socrates *by his good Works firſt, more than by his good Words*; *and he makes it a neceſſary quality of a good Orator, that he himſelf be Juſt and Virtuous. † And accordingly *Socrates* his Maſter being asked what he thought to be the beſt Inſtruction, anſwered, *Eupraxie*, or well-doing. Example hath indeed ſuch a power, that Men are in a great degree too often ſuch as thoſe are with whom they converſe, as even the Proverbs of many Nations have obſerved: So that he that gives a good Example, tho' he be but a private Perſon, does, in truth, a publick Service, and lays an Obligation upon the Age he lives

Mat. 23. 3.

* Τὰ δίκαια μὲν ἐπιδεικνύναι λέγειν, σοφίζεσθαι δὲ ἀδίκως.

* Ἀνάγκη τὸν ῥητορικὸν δίκαιον εἶναι, τὸ δίκαιον βούλεσθαι, δίκαια σοφίζεσθαι. *Gorg. fol.* 460.

† Ἐρωτᾶν δέ ποτε αὐτὸν τί ἄριστον εἴη παιδὶ μαθεῖν, εἶπεν εὐπραξίαν. *Diogenes, fol* 49.

lives in: But the *good Examples* of *Governours* and *Magistrates*, (I need not add, of *Ministers*) hath a far greater force of Perswasion; their Virtues are generally derived, by Imitation, into the Manners of the People. *How fatal an Influence more especially must then the *vicious Examples*, which the corrupt Nature of Man does with so much Ease comply with, of Superiours, of Persons in Authority, whose particular Province it is to look to the *Execution of the Laws*, have upon those below them? These Men carry not only those of their Neighbourhood, but a great part of the Counties they live in, after them; many of whom, 'tis very obvious, are apt to think it an Excuse, if not a Warrant, to transgress after their Example. The *Commission* of a *Justice of Peace* does therefore with great reason tell him, *That he is to keep himself, as well as cause to be kept, all the Ordinances and Statutes*, &c. As his giving a *good Example* is a likely way to procure a due regard to his *Office*, to maintain his *Authority*, and, with the Exercise of it, to reform *Others*; so, on the contrary, his giving a *bad Example* is as effectual a course to teach others to break the *Laws*, and to bring a Contempt upon his *Office*, and the *Government* it self, as can easily be thought of. I needed not to have been thus long upon this Head of Example, and particularly the malignant Influence of the bad Examples of Magistrates and great Men, if most Ages did not abound with such unhappy Instances, and if this Nation in particular had not felt so much the fatal Effects of them, as may be some Excuse for my insisting on it. But to go on: Besides the Mischief that is done by the vicious Examples of Magistrates, With what Reason can we expect, that those that make no Conscience to *break the Laws*, should diligently and conscientiously *Execute the Laws* upon others? And supposing such Magistrates should sometimes, either out of a fear of the Inspection of the *Government*, into their Behaviour, in the Reign of a Prince that is zealous

*Quales enim summi civitatis viri fuerunt, talis civitas erit. *Claudianus.*

Ut enim vitiis & sceleribus Magistratuum infici solet & corrumpi tota Respublica, ita corrigi & emendari.

Γινώσκων ὅτι τὸ τῆς πόλεως ὅλης ἦθος ὁμοιοῦται τοῖς ἄρχουσι. *Isocrates ad Nicoclem.*

Nec ignores totius civitatis mores ad exemplum Magistratuum conformari.

zealous in the Diſcouraging of Vice; or out of a deſire of keeping up their Reputation with better Men, be ſometimes inclined to puniſh ſuch Offences in others, as they are themſelves guilty of, conſciouſneſs of their own Faults will, when they act upon no better and firmer Principles, deprive them of Courage, and be very apt, upon many Occaſions, to draw them back from the Puniſhing of others; eſpecially when the Offenders are either their Superiors or Equals; whereas the Law knows no reſpect of Perſons, and they whoſe Buſineſs it is to Execute it, muſt do it without Diſtinction or Partiality. Their *Commiſſion* tells them, That they are *to chaſtiſe and puniſh all Perſons in the ſaid County offending.* And can any that conſider this, That we live under a Chriſtian Government, and that the Apoſtle acquaints us, That the Magiſtrate *is the Miniſter of God for Good*, That *he beareth not the Sword in Vain, Is a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that does Evil*; and that *Chriſtians* ſhou'd have a far greater Concern for the Honour of *God*, than for the Honour of their *Prince*, their own *Reputation* or *Eſtates*, but think that the Laws that relate to *Piety* and *Virtue* are to be chiefly regarded by the *Magiſtrate*, that his principal Care ſhould be applyed to the reſtraining Men, even thoſe of the higheſt Rank, from openly breaking thoſe *Laws*, by a ſtrict and impartial *Execution* of them, ſince the Reaſonableneſs of the Puniſhing of Men for the Violations of Religion ſeems to have been evident by the light of Nature? It being, I think, a juſt Obſervation, which I have ſome where met with, of a Heathen Philoſopher, *That tho' ſeveral Nations do appoint ſeveral Puniſhments for the Violation of Religion, it does not in any Countrey go wholly unpuniſhed.* No Mens Quality ought to ſhelter them from Puniſhment in this Caſe; Even *Privilege of Parliament* does not give thoſe who are allowed it for the Service of their Countrey, the miſchievous Liberty to trample upon the *Laws* of

Rom. 13. 3. Ver. 4.

God

God and their *Countrey*, nor will excuſe *Magiſtrates* from acting according to their *Oaths* in theſe Matters. Charity and good Manners would forbid us, if ſuch a Caſe had never been heard of, or was like to happen, to ſuppoſe that this Privilege ſhould ever be pretended on ſuch an Occaſion by any one of thoſe *Bodies*, who as they * make *Laws* againſt *Debauchery* and *Prophaneneſs*, ought likewiſe to endeavour, by their own Exemplary Behaviour, to promote Piety and good Manners, to give Laws of Civility to the reſt of the Nation, and to add, That if theſe things do happen, *good Magiſtrates*, 'tis to be hoped, will act as become them. And there is, I think, no doubt but the bringing to legal Puniſhment a Man of Title or Authority, that makes uſe of his Power or Intereſt to be more vicious, and to do greater Miſchief to the World than others, is a greater Service to Religion and our Countrey, and more highly honourable among Men, than the Puniſhing of a private Perſon, perhaps than many poor Creatures, who, as hath been long obſerved, generally ſuffer the Extremity of the Law for ſuch Offences as their Neceſſities are a Temptation to them, tho' not a Reaſon for them, to commit, when great Men, that cheat whole Provinces, and bid defiance to Sacred things, go unpuniſhed, if they are not rewarded. † If Hiſtory can tell us of Heathens that could do and ſuffer ſo much for the Maintenance of the *Laws* of their Countrey, ſhall it be ſuppoſed that the Fear of diſobliging a Man of Intereſt, that hath a ſwelling Title, one that is, I doubt, improperly called a Man of Honour, who affronts and contemns Reli-

*Receptumq; omnium pene Gentium, temporumq; memoriæ, ut ad legum latarum obſervantiam invitarentur inferiores ſortis homines, exemplo potentum, qui primi eas cuſtodire cogebantur, & præſertim illi ipſi qui eas tuliſſent, *Tit. Liv.* 3. *Decad. lib.* 8.

Magiſtratus, Gubernatores, Regeſq; obediunt quoq; ipſi legibus, id eſt, rectæ rationi. *Diodorus Siculus.*

Si quid injungere inferiori velis, prius in te ac tuos recipias, neceſſe eſt, ſi ipſe jus ſtatueris, quo faciliùs omnes obedientes habeas,

Val. Max. lib. 8. *cap.* 6. *Tit.* 3. Cum leges præſcripſiſti aliis, præſcripſiſti & tibi; leges enim Imperator ſert quas ipſe cuſtodiat. Præceptum ſalubre Pittaci ſapientis apud Auſonium: Pareto legi quiſq; legem ſanxeris.

† Si quis convictus furti eſſet apud Locrenſes, effodiebantur ei oculi. Contigit autem ut *Zaleuci* filius furti reus convitiaretur, cui quum Locrenſes pœnam remitterent, non tulit id pater, ſed ſibi unum, filio alterum voluit erui oculum. Legem quandam Tenediis tulit Tennes, qua licebat, Adulterum deprehenſum ſecuri necare: Quum itaq; filius ejus eſſet captus, interrogante regem qui cœperat, Quid ei faciendum? Reſpondebat, Lege utendum: quapropter & nummo ejus ab una parte ſecuris excuſa, ab altera facies viri & mulieris uno collo juncta.

gion,

gion, ſhould keep *Chriſtian Magiſtrates* from Executing the *Laws* of their *Country*, that are made for the Support of *Religion*, and to which they are Sworn. And yet, as unworthy and unaccountable as ſuch a Behaviour may appear to be, even by the Light of Nature, it were well, if for the Honour of *Chriſtian Magiſtrates*, nay, even of Humane Nature, that it could be denyed, * that many, I am unwilling to ſay moſt of the *Magiſtrates* in the late Reigns, lived and died with their *Commiſſions*, without putting any one of the *Laws*, that our more virtuous Anceſtors had left us againſt *Prophaneneſs* and *Debauchery*, in *Execution*, which ſome of the *worthy Magiſtrates* of this Reign, making a *Conſcience* of *Diſcharging* the *Oaths* they have taken, and the *Truſt* that is repoſed in them, by their Perſonal *Watchfulneſs* and *Diligence*, as well as by their giving *due Encouragement* to thoſe, who, without having *Oaths* to oblige them, or *Rewards* to encourage them, bring them *Informations* of the *Breaches* of thoſe Laws, which were grown almoſt obſolete and uſeleſs, have, to their great Honour, ſo ſucceſsfully done, with ſuch Oppoſition and Difficulty; and not only with greater Clamour from hardned Offenders, but with more Reflection from too many others, than they might have met with if they had been breaking them in the moſt impudent manner, had been making Attempts to deſtroy them. To prevent therefore, for the future, the Miſchief that this Nation may otherwiſe fall under, as it hath done, by the *Unfaithfulneſs* of *Magiſtrates*, it may deſerve Conſideration, whether it would not be highly adviſable, that, as we are told, the *Romans*, for this reaſon, ordered their *Magiſtrates* to give, at certain times, an Account of their Diligence, for the Maintenance of the Laws, to their * *Cenſors*, a chief part of whoſe Office it was, to look to a Reformation of Man-

* Pudet hæc opprobria nobis, & dici potuiſſe, & non potuiſſe refelli.

* Ipſorum Officium erat deſcribere facultates cujuſque Civis, obſervare ſingulorum hominum mores & vitam, tollere quoque omnia quæ probitati morum peſtem & perniciem illatura videbantur, *Roſinus de Antiquitatibus Romanis fol.* 520.

Cenſores mores populi regunto. Hæc detur cura Cenſoribus, quandoquidem eos in Republica ſemper volumus eſſe, *Cicero de Legibus, fol.* 340.

ners.

ners; and as our *Magiſtrates* are, by the late *Act of Parliament* againſt *Swearing* and *Curſing*, required to keep *Liſts* of thoſe Perſons that they have convicted of thoſe Offences, and to return them to the *Seſſions*; our *Magiſtrates* ſhould be likewiſe further obliged to bring in to our *Judges of Aſſize*, or to the *Quarter-Seſſions*, *Liſts* of ſuch as they have convicted upon all the *Statutes* againſt *Prophaneneſs* and *Debauchery*, which Method will, I humbly conceive, not only be effectual for the quickening the Diligence of Magiſtrates, but give a juſt Terrour to Offenders, and will afford the Government a means of knowing what Magiſtrates have moſt Honourably diſcharged their Truſts, done the greateſt Service to their Country, and deſerve the higheſt Regard from it. * And can any, unleſs they are faithful and zealous *Miniſters* of the *Goſpel*, be ſuppoſed to deſerve more Reſpect than thoſe *Magiſtrates* that conſcienciouſly apply themſelves to the Suppreſſing of *Vice* and *Prophaneneſs*, and to the Promoting of *Religion*? As the doing of this is, I conceive, the greateſt Benefit of *Magiſtracy*, and may be ſuppoſed, as hath been ſhewn, to be a great End for which it was appointed, ſo it can't, I think, be doubted, but God's Bleſſing may attend his Ordinance, the *Magiſtrates* zealous and united Endeavours for this purpoſe, ſo that they may ſucceed to the Spiritual good of particular Perſons, as well as to the good of the Publick; that as Afflictions are often ſent by Him, to awaken Men out of their Lethargy in their vicious Courſes, and in the nature of them tend to that end, the legal Corrections of Offenders, which may be looked on as Afflictions, may, with God's Bleſſing, work the ſame happy Effect upon them; and the rather, ſince they are the immediate and ſenſible Effects of their Sins; and of this, we are told, there hath been ſo many happy Inſtances ſince the beginning of theſe *Tranſactions*, as are ſufficient, without other Conſiderations, to encourage the *Magiſtrates* Diligence: But

* His autem duobus, præmiis & pœna, ſalus Reipublicæ quamplurimum continetur.

when this fails of the desired Success upon particular Persons, yet it is a vast Advantage to the Cause of Religion in general, to keep the Multitude, by the strict and exemplary Punishment of some Offenders, from the publick Commission of such Scandalous Sins as wast the Conscience, affront Religion, and directly tend to bring it into Contempt, that, as the Scripture expresses it, *All Israel may hear, and fear, and do no more any such Wickedness.* For considering the Original Corruption of our Nature, which is generally more depraved by our Education in a degenerate Age; that being thus depraved and weakned, we find it no very easie work to resist Temptations to Sins, to which we have either habituated our selves, or have a natural propensity, when they are naked and alone; and that 'tis much more difficult to encounter them when Temptations to those Sins are made stronger by the bad and eminent Examples which are almost every where to be seen in our Commerce with the World, there being but few that we meet with that do not recommend one Vice or other by their Example to our Imitation, and (which is, I think, still worse) most of those not such as profess themselves Enemies of Religion, but that pretend themselves Christians, entertain hopes of receiving the Benefits of Religion, and attend its Ordinances with Allowance, as often as they think it for Interest or Reputation to do so; considering, I say, these things, have we not great reason to fear, that most Men will continue to go over to the major Party, that triumph in Wickedness, and that few will have the Courage and Bravery to join with the lesser and too much despised Party of Virtue, to go against the Stream of a Debauched Age, (which, for ought I can see, there is greater likelyhood that it should still grow more strong and furious, than that it should abate) till frequent and publick Examples of Vice are taken out of publick View by either the Execution of our Civil Laws, or by the Revival of the ancient

Deut. 13. 11.

ancient Diſcipline of the Church. *Seneca* could, it ſeems, obſerve, That it was enough to ſhake the Reſolution of a *Socrates*, or a *Cato*, to bare up againſt and ſtem Vice, when it becomes ſo general and faſhionable, that it preſſes upon us with a kind of publick Authority. And tho' Chriſtians have a clearer Revelation than thoſe Heathens had of their Duty, higher Obligations, nobler Motives, and greater Aſſiſtances to perform it, yet, I conceive, our Religion does not teach us, nor our own Experience of Humane Frailty does not encourage us to make the way to our Duty, & Happineſs, as difficult as we can. 'Tis true, as may be objected, that Men are by no means to be ſuppoſed Religious, who are reſtrained from their Vices only by ſenſe of Shame, or fear of Humane Puniſhment; but yet they muſt be thought to be in a much fairer way of being ſo under thoſe Reſtraints, than they would be without them. By their being kept, by Humane Laws, from an Indulgence of their vicious Inclinations, they may in time find the Pleaſure and the Advantage of the Reſtraint: And bad Examples, that abound in moſt places, which I take to be the great Occaſion of Sin, being by this means taken away, *Vice* will become Scandalous, and *Virtue* will be in proportion eſteemed faſhionable; and thus, I think, very great points are gained. For when Men that are vicious in their Inclinations, and even thoſe that are grown old in Senſuality, ſee that *Religion* gives Men that Eſteem and Advantage as *Debauchery* and *Irreligion* hath done within our Memory, and they find moreover the Stream is turning, and bearing hard againſt them, then they will take ſome pains to be Virtuous, at leaſt to appear in the Dreſs of Virtue; then may we expect that Men will begin to enquire into the Nature and Reaſons of Religion, and when they find, by a ſober Advertence to its Propoſals, (which they will now make without Prejudice,) and by ſome Experience they will have of the happy Effects of it, by their endeavouring to imitate it, that it prohibits us thoſe things that

would be moſt highly injurious to us, and allows a Satisfaction to our rational Appetites; that it hath ſuch Excellencies as out-bid and put out of countenance all the Advantages that the World can offer; that it fortifies us againſt the croſs Occurrences and Calamities, the Changes and Storms of Life, and the Fears of Death, diſarms it of its Stings and Terrours: to ſay no more, that it ſilences the bitter Remonſtrances and ſtinging Reproaches of Conſcience, delivers us from Plagues and Fears, Confuſion and Sorrow, from the tormenting Guilt, and the cruel Uſurpation and Outrages of our Luſts and Paſſions, and gives us in Exchange the noble Pleaſure of the Victory over our ſelves, who are our worſt Maſters, the Joys of Innocence, the Triumphs of a good Conſcience, and the Extaſies of Heavenly Hopes, and directs us to the Regions of Bliſs, to *Joys unſpeakable and full of Glory:* Then may it be that the good Diſpoſitions, which we may call the Seeds of Virtue, which ſeemed before as it were choak'd in ſome with ill Habits, may be awakened, and revive, and that others, who had ſome weak Inclinations to Religion, but had not ſtrength enough to bear the Contempt that now too often, if not generally attends the ſincere Practice of it, to go in an untrodden way, againſt the Tyranny of Cuſtom and Example, will take courage: Then may we hope to ſee Virtue, that hath been ſo long ſlighted and oppreſſed, drawn out of its Obſcurity, delivered from that Contempt which the Prevalency and Inſolence of Sin hath flung upon it, and imbittered it, be admired, embraced, enthroned. So that the *Magiſtrates* taking away out of publick View *Examples* of *Prophaneneſs* and *Debauchery*, by a ſtrict *Execution of the Laws*, ſeems as proper, if not as neceſſary a means for the keeping of Vice from the further ſpreading its Contagion, and the retrieving of Virtue, as the preventing of thoſe that have the Plague upon them from mixing with thoſe that are not infected, and ſhutting of them up is neceſſary

to

to the ſtopping the Raging of that Diſtemper; and as it is not to be doubted, that where thoſe that have the Plague viſibly upon them are allowed to converſe promiſcuouſly with the Sound, even to walk publickly in the Streets, it muſt be a certain ſign that the Diſtemper is Epidemical, that there is little hopes of putting a ſtop to it, or that thoſe whoſe proper Buſineſs it is to ſhut up, and take care of the Diſeaſed, are themſelves infected with the Diſtemper; ſo it muſt in like manner be thought to be when there is no care taken of the moral Diſeaſes of a State, when publick Prophaneneſs and Vice not only go unpuniſhed by the Magiſtrate, but are triumphant. From hence therefore 'tis evident, that ſuch Magiſtrates as diligently diſcharge their Office, are not only inſtrumental in doing good to particular Perſons, but to the Publick, and may be ſo of a General Reformation, and do therein what we have ground to believe is highly acceptable to God; for thus ſaith God by the Prophet, *Them that honour me I will honour; and they that deſpiſe me ſhall be lightly eſteemed.* And accordingly we are told in the Holy Scriptures how acceptable to God the Zeal of *Phinehas* was, in Executing of Judgment upon *Zimri* and *Cosbi*; *Behold, I give unto him my Covenant of Peace, and he ſhall have it, and his Seed after him, even the Covenant of an Everlaſting Prieſthood, becauſe he was Zealous for his God*, &c. And the *Pſalmiſt* tells us, That *it was accounted to him for Righteouſneſs unto all Generations for evermore.*

1 *Sam.* 2. 29.

Numb. 25, 12, 13.

Pſal. 106. 31.

But now ſince His Majeſty's *late Proclamation*, and the *Addreſs* of the Houſe of Commons to His Majeſty, do not only give us too great reaſon to fear, that all *Magiſtrates* will not duly conſider this as they ought, but plainly tells our *Magiſtrates* that their Negligence and Unfaithfulneſs in their Office is the great Cauſe of the *Debauchery* and *Prophaneneſs* of the Kingdom. It may not be indecent or improper in this place to ſhew, in ſome Inſtances, how

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Magiſtrates may be liable to this Imputation. And firſt, ſuch *Magiſtrates* as can take ſuch *Solemn Oaths*, and accept of ſuch *Truſts*, without any ſerious Intention to diſcharge them, who, tho' they are not vicious themſelves, can obſerve, without any concern, the Breaches of God's Laws; nay, in the courſe of many Years do not exerciſe their Authority, by any one ſingle act, for the Puniſhing and Suppreſſing of the horrid Indignities that are daringly and almoſt in all Places offered to the Great God of Heaven and Earth, at the ſame time that they are very ſenſible of, and do highly reſent any Affronts that are offered their Prince, and even their own Perſons: Or thoſe that are ſo wonderfully gentle and flexible, ſo over-run with Pity, that they can diſcharge Impious and Debauched Wretches upon any common Pretences, their Cries or Complaints, or the ſcandalous Interceſſions of their powerful Advocates, tho' frequently brought before them, and often with great difficulty by faithful Officers, or zealous Informers. As the inflicting of Puniſhment on ſuch Offenders is what Magiſtrates are ſtrictly obliged to, and is moreover what a juſt Compaſſion to Criminals and the Community do loudly call for: So, on the contrary, this Gentleneſs to them, which I have deſcribed, is a great Injuſtice, and may, I think, be reckoned among thoſe Mercies that *Solomon* tells us are cruel. *It muſt at firſt naming appear to thinking Men a fooliſh and criminal Pity, a great Cruelty to the Offenders themſelves, and the Community. To the *Offenders* themſelves, who by being ſuffered to paſs unpuniſhed in their wicked Courſes, generally go on, frequently grow obſtinate in them, and often bring on themſelves, with the juſt Permiſſion, or by the Judgment of God, far greater Sufferings in this World than the legal Puniſhment of them would have amounted to; the Ruine of their Eſtates, Families, Health, a ſudden or a ſcandalous Death by publick Juſtice, and without Repentance, Everlaſting Deſtruction in the World to come; all which the timely and

* Sicut eſt miſericordia puniens, ita eſt crudelitas parcens.

and wholeſome Puniſhment of them by the *Magiſtrate* might have been a means of preventing. * But this Gentleneſs is a Cruelty and great Injuſtice to the *Community*; for hereby *publick Juſtice* is obſtructed and triumph'd over, *Magiſtracy* is deſpiſed, the * *Government* it ſelf is diſparaged and weakned, *National Guilt*, which calls for National Puniſhment, is contracted, thoſe that are either already actually vicious, or that have vicious Inclinations, are encouraged to continue or to engage in ill Courſes, which the Body of the People groan under the ſad Effects of, by the continual Sufferings of one kind or other that are by this means brought upon them: And thus other Mens Sins ſeem to be made, in ſome ſenſe, the Sins of *Magiſtrates*, according to that known Saying, That he that permits Offences to be committed, which he hath Power and Opportunity to prevent, doth in ſome ſort command them to be done; or in Scripture Phraſe, Magiſtrates hereby ſeem to be *Partakers in others Sins.* Out of a ſenſe whereof, a former Prince of this Nation is reported to have ſaid, upon his hearing that a Perſon whom he had pardoned for one Murther, (againſt the expreſs Word of God) had committed another, *That he himſelf Murthered the ſecond Perſon, by Pardoning the Offender for his firſt Offence.* Such *Magiſtrates* then as theſe are plainly acceſſory to the Debauchery of the Nation; as, in the next place, thoſe muſt be thought to have been, if there hath been any ſuch who have been ſo far from applying themſelves, as their *Oaths* oblige them, to the Execution of the Laws againſt *Prophaneneſs* and *Vice*, that they have uſed their Skill and Diligence to diſcourage and hinder thoſe of their own Body in doing their Duty, who have had the Honeſty and Zeal to diſcharge it, by making it troubleſome and difficult to them, by muſtering up, upon Occaſion, ſallacious Arguments, even the common Excuſes of Criminals againſt their Proſecution and Puniſhment. As for Inſtance; If they ſhould have urged againſt the Puniſhing

* Clementiores lege judices eſſe non oportet.

* Legum ac Magiſtratuum contemptum ſequuntur populi ſeditioſæ voces, & adverſus Principes ipſos conjurationes ac defectiones, *Bodin Rep. Lib.* 3. *c.* 1.

Puniſhing of Men for *Swearing* and *Curſing*, that 'tis too ſevere to make Men Examples for Words, which, tho' they ſhould not be uſed, may fall from them unawares, without an ill Intention, and without Injury, no Man being ſuppoſed to be the worſe for another Man's Prophanely wiſhing him Damnation; and if Men are accuſtomed to ſuch Language, or likewiſe to Drunkenneſs or Lewdneſs, 'tis difficult to break Habits, eſpecially of ſuch Vices to which we have Temptations from our corrupt Nature; and therefore to puniſh Gentlemen for theſe Offences ſeems to be ill Breeding, as well as Severity, and to tend moreover to the deſtroying of Converſation, and to the making of Life an inſipid thing; and to execute the Laws againſt *Vice* and *Prophaneneſs* upon Men of an inferior Rank, is to diſable them to pay Taxes, for the Support of the Government, the Reſtraining more eſpecially of ſome of them from frequenting of *Ale-Houſes* and *Taverns* on the *Lord's-Day*, and others of them from the Permitting of *Tipling* in thoſe Houſes, is the direct way to leſſen His Majeſty's Revenue ariſing by Exciſe, *&c.* If ſuch Arguments as theſe ſhould have been made uſe of by Magiſtrates in this, or in the former Reigns, to obſtruct the Suppreſſion of theſe Enormities, it will be readily confeſſed by Men of any virtuous Principles, that ſuch Men plainly fall under the Charge of being a great Cauſe of the Debauchery of the Nation. But having been led beſides my Intention to name theſe fallacious and ſcandalous Arguments, and particularly the laſt and moſt ſpecious of them that concerns the *Exciſe*, I ask leave of my Reader, leſt we ſhould have any ſuch unhappy Men among us as ſhould be ſo over-run with Concern for the Supplies of the Government as to have little or no Concern for their Duty to their God, or Regard to his Providence over-ruling Kingdoms, and ſhould not therefore be ſenſible of either the Impiety or Abſurdity of theſe Arguments, to put ſuch in mind, that if the poorer ſort of Men are allowed to ſpend all, or a great part of their Money in *Taverns* and *Ale-Houſes*, they

they will not be in a very good Condition to maintain their Families, or to pay Taxes, which ſuch Men are, upon this Occaſion, I doubt, chiefly concerned about; or that if Men of a Superiour Rank have Money enough to maintain their Families, and diſcharge their other Obligations, and to ſpare, and they have no better Inclinations than to carry it to thoſe Houſes, they have time enough to ſpend it in them on the other ſix days of the Week, without invading upon the *Lord's-Day*, to the Neglect of their Duty to their Families, and the manifeſt danger of the Ruine of their own Souls; or that, laſtly, if a conſiderable number of ſuch Houſes, many of which are Stews or Receptacles for High-way-Men, Coiners, and Pick-Pockets, were ſuppreſſed, as they ought to be by Law, we ſhould therein act agreeably to the common Reaſon of Mankind, as well as to the Wiſdom of our Anceſtors, who, from a ſenſe of the great Miſchief that is done the Publick, by ſuffering an unneceſſary number of *Publick Houſes*, the true and reaſonable Deſign and Uſes whereof are, as is obſerved in the Preamble of one of our Statutes, for the Entertainment of *Travellers*, and for the Convenience of *Day-Labourers*, and poorer Perſons, and not for a Refuge for idle and vicious People, thought it neceſſary to diſcourage the Encreaſe, and to reſtrain the exceſſive Number of them by the Laws made for this purpoſe; if this, I ſay, was now done, there would be enough left as might be ſufficient not only to anſwer the reaſonable Uſes of them, but to ruine, as 'tis not, I think, to be doubted they actually do, many more Families than are ſupported by them, and the Perſons that keep ſuch diſorderly Houſes, as they might be much more honeſtly employed, ſo more uſefully to the Publick, in ſome other way of Living than in this Employment, which ſeems, above moſt others, deſtructive to it. From a Conſideration whereof we may ſuppoſe it was that our late Gracious Queen, in the Abſence of the King, did ſignifie by the

1 *Jac. Reg. c.* 9.

11 *Hen.* 7. *c.* 2. 5 & 6 *Ed.* 6. *cap.* 25.

Right Honourable the Lord Chancellour of *England*, to the Juſtices of *Middleſex*, whom his Lordſhip ordered to wait on him upon this Occaſion, (as by their printed Order made in purſuance of it may appear) That it was Her Majeſty's Pleaſure that they ſhould uſe their utmoſt Diligence to prevent the Frequenting of *Ale-Houſes* and *Taverns* on the *Lord's-Day, as well out of time of Divine Service as in*, by putting the Laws made againſt Tipling in thoſe Houſes in ſtrict Execution, as His Majeſty by His *Proclamation* hath ſince done. But ſuch Objections as theſe have ſo little appearance of common ſenſe, and leſs of a good meaning in them, that they do not deſerve a more particular Confutation; and as they ſerve as well for the not Puniſhing *Perjury*, *Bribery*, *&c.* ſo they would be with much more Decency offered, and one would hope ſooner to hear of them urged, under a Heathen Government, than in a Proteſtant Country, and eſpecially under the Reign of a Prince that hath declared that he deſires his Government ſhould be ſupported by the Virtues, and not the Vices of his People. If therefore ſuch Arguments as theſe ſhould be uſed in this Reign, eſpecially by *Magiſtrates*, What an Indignity would thereby be offered to the King, and to the Nation? His Majeſty hath not gone through ſo many Years Fatigues, and expoſed himſelf to ſo many Perſonal Dangers by Land and Sea, and the Nation hath not loſt ſo much Blood, and ſpent ſo many Millions for the ſecuring of our Liberties, and the obtaining a Peace with our Neighbours, that bad Men may have the Liberty to Blaſpheme the God of Heaven, and by their crying Sins to provoke Him to deſtroy us, to fling Contempt upon Religion, and inſult over our Laws, and to ruine us as well as themſelves, under the falſe and ſcandalous Pretences that we ſhall be, by their Impunity, the better enabled to pay off the Debt that is upon the Nation; that His Majeſty's Revenue will be encreaſed by the Encreaſe of *Drunkenneſs*, *Prophanation* of

1 *Jac. cap.* 9.
1 *Jac. cap.* 4.
21 *Jac. cap.* 7.
1 *Car. cap.* 4.
4 *Jac. cap.* 5.

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the *Lord's-Day*, *&c.* If we ſhould have any *Magiſtrates* who ſhould thus wildly argue, to hinder the Proſecution of ſuch Offenders, and if this Frenzy ſhould thereby prevail, What an infatuated Nation muſt we be thought to be? But ſuppoſing that we are not in danger of *Magiſtrates*, eſpecially in this Reign, that ſhall thus abuſe their Authority to the vileſt Purpoſes, by making it a Covert for acting the baſeſt things, what ſhall we think, in the next place, of ſuch *Magiſtrates*, if we ſhould have any of them, who, when their *Commiſſion* tells them that they *are to keep the Laws, as well as cauſe them to be kept*, ſhould frequently and openly break them, by whoſe bad Examples Multitudes may be led into vicious Courſes, or confirmed in them, and by it and their Unfaithfulneſs in their Office, (which I take to be generally a Conſequence of the other) a Nation may be drawn into Ruine, inſtead of being reformed by them? May not ſuch *Magiſtrates* be juſtly charged with being a great Cauſe of the Debauchery of the Nation? And what a load of Guilt muſt thereby lie upon them? Unhappy Men, that when they have ſo many Sins of their own, they will by this means contract ſo terrible an Addition to them. Hiſtory tells us of more than one *Unfaithful Magiſtrate* who have been flea'd, and whoſe Skins have ſerv'd to cover the Bench or Place where they ſate: But what is this Puniſhment to that which an *Unfaithful Magiſtrate* hath reaſon to fear in the next World, tho' he meets with none in this? Suppoſing then from His Majeſty's *Proclamation*, and the *Addreſs* of the late Houſe of Commons, that there may have been, within our Memory, ſome ſuch Magiſtrates as theſe, does it not behove ſuch unhappy Souls ſpeedily to lay to heart the dreadful Sin of their having been Promoters of the Devil's Kingdom, and of publick Ruine? And I need not ſurely tell them, that 'tis not enough for them to be ſenſible of their Guilt and Danger, to be ſorry for the great Miſchief they have done their

Country, without heartily endeavouring to retrieve it by their future Diligence and contrary Behaviour. The Nature of diſtributive Juſtice, which their Office acquaints them with, requires a Man to repair the Injuries he has done to any. This is ſo ſtated a Rule among Divines, in the various kinds of known and wilful Injuries we may do to the Souls and Bodies, Eſtates and Reputation of our Neighbours, and is ſo generally acknowledged, that I ſhall not labour to prove it. If then 'tis allow'd, that all ſorts of wilful Injuries that we do our Neighbours, without Repentance for them, expoſe us to the Juſtice of God, and that our Repentance is not in ordinary Caſes reckoned ſound and compleat, unleſs we endeavour, when it is in our power, to repair the Injuries we have done. Can ſuch Men be imagined ſo blindly partial to themſelves, as not to think, where they have publickly diſhonoured God, have drawn, by their wicked Example, Numbers of Men into Sin, or confirmed 'em in it, have made uſe of their Authority to patronize Vice, (and perhaps to diſcredit and oppoſe juſt Endeavours of Reformation) in Contempt of their Oaths and Truſts, and have thereby done ſo much Injury to a Kingdom, that they are not obliged, for the removing the load of Guilt that is upon them, the obtaining Forgiveneſs from *God*, a well-grounded Peace in their own Minds, and Eſteem from Men, ſincerely to endeavour to repair the Injuries they have done *Religion*, their *Neighbour*, or their *Country*, by their future Care and Diligence? and till they do give the World ſome proof of this, they will not take it amiſs if we do not think, that their late Repreſentatives in Parliament have put them under too heavy a Charge; and if we ſay that this is ſo very Great, that tho' we are ſure that the Chriſtian Religion is the beſt Religion in the World, yet it ſo much condemns ſuch Practices, that ſuch as are guilty of them are a diſhonour to their Profeſſion, that we do not reckon honeſt *Heathens*

the

the worſt ſort of Men, or rather, that there are few, if any, worſe than corrupt and unfaithful Magiſtrates. And therefore, methinks, tho' ſuch Magiſtrates were deaf to all Counſel, were ſo given over to a Spirit of Slumber, that no Motives that have been offered them from Religion will make any ſuch Impreſſion upon them, as to awaken them to a ſenſe of their Sin and Danger, if they have yet any thing of the Modeſty of Men remaining, Shame might oblige them to a better Behaviour; that they ſhould not be able to look a Man in the Face that hath a Love to God and his Countrey; but more eſpecially, that they ſhould be in the greateſt Confuſion to hear in the Church, if they ſhould come there, the King's *Proclamation* Four times in the Year, charging them with being the great Cauſe of the Increaſe of *Prophaneneſs* and *Vice* in the Nation. It hath been generally thought an Indication of a good and generous Mind to deſire an honeſt Reputation among Men; and, on the contrary, a ſign of a baſe Soul wholly to deſpiſe it; on which Conſideration *Solon* might well preſume in the Laws he gave the *Athenians*, *That he that hath no Value for his Reputation, will have little or no Regard to the publick Intereſt*; for how can it be reaſonably imagined, that he ſhould have a tender ſenſe of the Honour or Intereſt of his Country, who hath no ſenſe of his own Honour and greateſt Intereſt, but that he will ſacrifice them upon Occaſion? Indeed, he that hath neither regard to Conſcience, nor ſenſe of Shame, ſeems not only in great danger of not being reduced to Virtue by any common Methods, but to be loſt to almoſt all good purpoſes, to be unfit for common Intercourſes with Men, but much more unfit to be honoured and entruſted with the Care of the Execution and Maintenance of the Laws, wherein the Religion, the * Honour and Proſperity of the Nation is ſo highly concerned: And therefore I ſubmit it to the Judgment of thoſe who are more eſpecially concerned to conſider of theſe im-

* Inter omnia quæ Rempublicam ejuſq; felicitatem conſervant, quid utilius, quid præſtantius quam viros ad Magiſtratus gerendos eligere, ſumma prudentia & virtute præditos? quiq; ad honores obtinendos non ambitione, non largitionibus, ſed virtute & modeſtia ſibi parent aditum

important Matters, whether it is not highly to be wiſhed, that effectual Care may be taken for the preventing the fatal Conſequences of ſuch Mens obtaining, in any future Reign, Commiſſions of this kind, particularly by diſabling any to hold them after they are convicted a certain number of times of the Violations of the Laws which they are entruſted to execute. For if we enquire into the Reaſons of the Happineſs of moſt, if not all of thoſe Nations, who have arrived at the greateſt pitch of Glory and Proſperity, we ſhall, I believe, have a general Conſent, That the Diligence and Faithfulneſs of Magiſtrates have been one of the greateſt Cauſes of it, unqueſtionably far more inſtrumental therein than good Laws, * which, we know, are but dead Letters without the Magiſtrates Execution of them. And therefore *Plato*, in his Common-Wealth, more apply'd himſelf to the Forming of Magiſtrates than Laws. And accordingly 'twas wiſely obſerved by *Cicero*, *That if Magiſtrates keep the Laws themſelves they had little more to wiſh for.* And by the Famous *Athenian* Law-giver, *That Magiſtrates ought to Obey the Laws, as well as the People the Magiſtrates, that a Government may be laſting.* Indeed we cannot eaſily conceive how any Nation can be long happy without good Magiſtrates: So that 'tis with great Reaſon that our *Church* directs both them and us to pray, That *all that are put in Authority may truly and indifferently miniſter Juſtice, to the Puniſhment of Wickedneſs and Vice, and to the Maintenance of God's true Religion and Virtue*; and that we eſteem thoſe that thus diſcharge their Duty as great Bleſſings to their Country, and praiſe God for them; and, on the contrary, that we think that thoſe unhappy Men, who under the Obligation of Oaths and Truſts have neglected or oppoſed the Execution of the Laws for the Puniſhment of Wickedneſs and Vice, and maintenance of Religion, do deſervedly lie under the dreadful Imputation of having been *a great Cauſe of the Prophaneneſs and Debauchery of the*

* Verè dici poteſt Magiſtratum legem eſſe loquentem, legem autem mutum eſſe Magiſtratum. Magiſtratibus igitur opus eſt, ſine quorum prudentia & diligentia civitas non poteſt ſtare, *Cic. de Leg. p.* 332. Cum leges omnes vel optimæ abſque probatiſſimis Magiſtratibus mortuæ ſint, Magiſtratus autem optimi vel abſque legibus ſcriptis ipſi ſunt divæ leges, merito *Plato* non in condendis Legibus, ſed formandis Magiſtratibus omni diligentia elaboravit.

the Nation, and the fatal Enemies of it, ſince we may look on that Nation, whether it be our own, or any other, to be in a very languiſhing Condition, and in manifeſt danger of Ruine, where the Magiſtrates, and the Generality of Men of greater Ranks, who have, by their being placed in higher Stations, as Stars in higher Orbs, ſo many Advantages to conduct the lower Ranks of Men by the ſhining Examples of virtuous Lives, to ſupport the Reputation and Intereſt of Virtue, do, by the Abuſe of their Authority, or by their vicious Behaviour, ſcatter a peſtilential Infection where-ever they come, baſely make uſe of the Advantages they have above others to the Diſhonour of God, by whoſe Permiſſion they enjoy them; inſtead of being Patrons of Religion, * help to debauch thoſe about them, and ruine their Country.

* Nam licet videre, ſi velis replicare memoriam temporum, qualeſcunq; ſummi Civitatis fuerint, talem Civitatem fuiſſe. Idq; haud paulò eſt verius quam quod Platoni noſtro placet, qui Muſicorum cantibus ait mutatis, mutari Civitatum ſtatus, ego autem Nobilium vita, victuq; mutato, mores mutari Civitatum puto, *Cic. de Leg. p.* 336.

Inferior Officers are likewiſe obliged by their *Oaths*, as well as by the Deſign of their *Offices*, to be diligent in bringing Offenders to Puniſhment; and therefore they are highly criminal if they are negligent therein. The Conſtable's Oath tells him, *That he is to uſe his Endeavour that Night-walkers be apprehended. To ſee that the Statutes made for puniſhing Vagabonds, and ſuch idle Perſons, coming within his Bounds and Limits, be duly put in Execution. To have a watchful Eye to ſuch Perſons as ſhall maintain or keep any Common Houſe or Place where any unlawful Game is or ſhall be uſed; as alſo, to ſuch as ſhall frequent or uſe ſuch Places, or ſhall uſe or exerciſe any unlawful Games there or elſewhere, contrary to the Statutes. To preſent at the Aſſizes, Seſſions of the Peace, or Leet, all and every the Offences done contrary to the Statutes made to reſtrain the inordinate haunting and tipling in Inns, Ale-houſes, and other Victualling-houſes, and for Repreſſing of Drunkenneſs; and that he is well and duly, according to his Knowledge, Power, and Ability, to do and execute all other things belonging to a Conſtable's Office.* Who-

Whoever therefore they be that undertake this Office, and wink at Offenders, or do not endeavour to bring them to Puniſhment, would do well to conſider how they can be acquitted from Perjury; but how much clearer is their Fault, if they neglect or refuſe to ſerve thoſe *Warrants* which are brought to them againſt *Swearers*, *Drunkards*, *Lewd Perſons*, and *Prophaners* of the *Lord's-Day*; or to levy the ſeveral Forfeitures for thoſe Offences? as too many *Conſtables*, *Headboroughs*, *Overſeers* and *Church-Wardens* have done, which the Commiſſion of a Juſtice of the Peace tells him he is to inquire after. Their Guilt is of the ſame Nature with that of a *Juſtice*, who diſcourages Informations, and refuſes to ſign Warrants againſt ſuch Offenders, whereby, beſides all other Aggravations of their Sin, they hinder the Poor of that Relief which the Law gives them out of the Penalties upon thoſe Statutes, which in ſome Caſes may happen to be the depriving them of their Lives, * and ought to be a dreadful Conſideration to thoſe that have the Guilt of it upon them; the Poor having as good and undoubted a Right to theſe Forfeitures, veſted in them by Law, as any Man hath to his own Eſtate. I have ſaid ſo much of the *Conſtable's* Duty, that there is the leſs need of my adding much of the *Church-Warden's*, *Sideſman's*, and other *Inferior Officers* Obligations in this reſpect, which fall in with that of the *Conſtable's*.

Dalt. p. 18. c. 5.

* Panis Pauperum eſt vita eorum, & qui fraudat eos eſt vir ſanguinis.

The *Church-Warden's* and *Sideſman's* Oath does not run in the ſame terms in all Dioceſſes, though his Office is, I ſuppoſe, much the ſame in moſt, if not all. The Tenor of the *Church-Warden's* and *Sideſman's* Oath in the Dioceſs of *London*, is as follows:

You ſhall Swear truly and faithfully to execute the Office of a Church-Warden within your Pariſh, and according to the beſt of your Skill and Knowledge preſent ſuch Things and Perſons as you know to be preſentable by the Laws Eccleſiaſtical of the Realm.

And

And one of the *Articles of Enquiry* exhibited to the *Miniſters*, *Church-Wardens*, and *Sideſmen* of every Pariſh, runs thus: *Are any of your Pariſh known or ſuſpected to be guilty of* Inceſt, Adultery, Fornication, *or any other Enormous Crimes? Do any prophane the* Lord's-Day, *or any other great Holy-day, or the* Name *of* GOD? And if the *Church-Wardens* and *Sideſmen* neglect to preſent, the *Miniſters* are told, *That they may, and ought to preſent, as they have the higheſt Obligations to ſuppreſs Iniquity.*

From hence 'tis plain, That the Power of Inferior Officers, as well as that of Magiſtrates, is great, and would have a very remarkable Effect for the Suppreſſing of publick Diſorders if it was generally uſed, and might (with God's Bleſſing) go very far towards a National Reformation, with the Aſſiſtance of the Magiſtrate, if private Perſons would but do as becomes them, in giving Informations againſt *Swearers*, *Drunkards*, *Lewd Perſons*, and *Prophaners* of the *Lord's-Day*, to the Magiſtrate, which ſhall be my next Buſineſs to recommend to the Conſideration of all that have a Love to God, their Neighbour, or their Country.

It hath been proved, That the Execution of Good Laws is requiſite, in our preſent Circumſtances, for the Suppreſſing of Vice, and the Effecting a Reformation of Manners; but Magiſtrates cannot put the Laws in Execution againſt Offenders without they have the Knowledge of the Offences: And they cannot be preſent at all Places to obſerve them, tho' they have either ſuch a Senſe of their Duty, or ſo pious a Concern to do all the good they can in their Office, as frequently to take their Walks, to obſerve Diſorders, as divers of the worthy Magiſtrates have here done, in the ſeveral Quarters of the County in which they live, and in embracing all Opportunities of uſing their Authority for the Suppreſſing them: And thoſe Offences that are deeds of Darkneſs, it may be hoped, for the Honour of our Magiſtrates, are not now generally and

knowingly committed before them. One would think that the Preſence of a Magiſtrate ſhould have ſuch an Awe upon ill Men, that they ſhould never dare to tranſgreſs before him: That he ſhould reſent it as a high Affront to him, if a Perſon of the higheſt Rank ſhould diſcover ſo baſe an Opinion of him, as to expect that he ſhould break his Oath, to ſuffer him, upon the Account of his Quality, to go unpuniſhed for any Offence of this kind committed before him. It is certainly much ſo where Magiſtrates have a juſt Senſe of Honour, or are as Zealous and Faithful in the Diſcharge of their Office as they ought; but the leſs this may reaſonably be hoped from all Magiſtrates at this day: There appears, I am ſure, the more reaſon, or rather neceſſity, for private Perſons applying themſelves to this Buſineſs of giving Informations to them of our reigning Sins, without which, it is not reaſonably to be expected that Offenders will be generally brought to Puniſhment, eſpecially in Cities and Corporations, where it may be preſumed, without Uncharitableneſs, that many are daily either publickly or privately breaking the Laws againſt Prophaneneſs and Immorality.

Thus then our giving of Informations of theſe Offences to the Magiſtrate ſeems abſolutely neceſſary in our preſent Circumſtances, as we heartily deſire or expect the Suppreſſion of Prophaneneſs and Vice by Humane Laws. And I deſire thoſe who would be informed whether there is any Direction or Example for this Practice from the Word of God, to conſider the following Texts of Scripture:

Deut. 17. 2. *If there be found among you within any of thy Gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee, Man or Woman that hath wrought Wickedneſs in the ſight of the Lord thy God, in tranſgreſſing*
Ver. 3. *his Covenant, And he hath gone and ſerved other Gods, and*
Ver. 4. *worſhipped them, And it be told thee, and thou haſt heard of it, and enquired diligently, and behold it be true, and the thing*
Ver. 5. *certain, that ſuch Abomination is wrought in Iſrael: Then ſhalt thou*

thou bring forth that Man, or that Woman, (which hath committed that Wicked thing) unto thy Gates, even that Man or that Woman, and ſhalt ſtone them with Stones till they die. And the Iſraelitiſh Womans Son Blaſphemed the Name of the Lord, and Curſed, and they brought him unto Moſes. And the Lord ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying, Bring forth him that hath Curſed without the Camp, and let all that heard him lay their Hands upon his Head, and let all the Congregation ſtone him. Now when theſe things were done, the Princes came to me, ſaying, The People of Iſrael, and the Prieſts and the Levites, have not ſeparated themſelves from the People of the Lands doing according to their Abominations, &c. And if he neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church. Nay, they would do well to conſider in how many Inſtances, under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, thoſe who ſaw, or were acquainted with ſuch Offences, were poſitively commanded to be Witneſſes or Informers againſt the Perſons who committed them, tho' they were their neareſt Relations: Thus, *If thy Brother, the Son of thy Mother, or thy Son, or thy Daughter, or the Wife of thy Boſom, or thy Friend which is as thine own Soul, entice thee ſecretly, ſaying, Let us go and ſerve other Gods. Thou ſhalt not conſent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither ſhalt thine Eye pity him, neither ſhalt thou ſpare, neither ſhalt thou conceal him. But thou ſhalt ſurely kill him; thine Hand ſhall be firſt upon him to put him to Death, and afterwards the Hand of all the People. And all Iſrael ſhall hear, and fear, and ſhall do no more any ſuch Wickedneſs as this is among you.* Now tho' this Method of giving Informations to the Magiſtrate againſt prophane and vicious Perſons may appear to unthinking People to carry Severity in it, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew that it may be lookt on as a comprehenſive Branch of Charity, and a Religious Office, when 'tis performed, as other good Acts ſhould be, with pure Intentions, upon proper Occaſions, and in a Chriſtian Temper.

Lev. 24. 11. *Ver.* 13. *Ver.* 14. *Ezra* 9. 1. *Matt.* 18. 17. *Deut.* 13. 6. *Ver.* 8. *Ver.* 9. *Ver.* 11.

It is, in the first place, a great Kindness to the *Poor*; the Money that is raised by Convictions upon these Statutes against Prophaneness and Vice being by Law given to them, whereby they have in Fact had, for several Years past, in *London* and *Westminster*, a considerable Supply, in the times of their great Distress; and the Burthen of the Provision for them, that hath lain so heavy on Parishes, has been eased: So that this Office, if there was no other Reason for it, one would think should be agreeable to Men of Charity, to those especially whose Circumstances will not permit them to give such Assistance to the Poor as they could otherwise wish; the Good of our poor Neighbour being hereby promoted by the same Act that prevents God's Dishonour. But these Informations against Offenders will, I conceive, be found, upon an impartial Enquiry, to be a real *Act of Charity*, even towards the Persons offending, and to the Publick, as well as to those who are relieved by the Penalties levied upon them. 'Tis universally acknowledged, that we are not only to apply our selves to the working out our own Salvation, but that we are to be concern'd for the Salvation of one anothers Souls, and to endeavour to further it, according to our Advantages and Opportunities; and that this Care is an Expression of great Charity to our Neighbour, and highly acceptable to Almighty God. *Jam.* 5. 20. For we are told, That *he which converteth a Sinner from the Errour of his way, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall* *Dan.* 12. 3. *hide a multitude of Sins*; and that *they that turn many to Righteousness shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever.* Prayer, Admonition, Reproof, and good Example, are all proper means for this end, and often inculcated in the Word of God; but when there is little hopes of our Neighbour's Amendment by the use of such means, as I conceive there often is, where the Offender is so impudent and hardned, that he despises Counsel and Reproof, or it makes no sort of good Impression upon him, but he rather takes an Occasion

ſion to commit the more Sin, by falling into Paſſion, or other Unchriſtian Irregularities, and he bids defiance to all other means, as he too often does, when he is ſo far from being aſhamed of his Wickedneſs, that he values himſelf upon it, and makes a *Mock at Sin*, as *Solomon* tells us Fools do; *Prov.* 14. 9. that he calls upon his Maker to damn him, or he otherwiſe glories in his Shame: And our Saviour's Direction takes place, of *not caſting of Pearls before Swine:* And we have, *Matt.* 7. 6. laſtly, little or no reaſon to expect any help or redreſs in this caſe from the Eccleſiaſtical Power, by *telling his Offences to the Church:* Is it not an Act of Charity to try what the bringing the Offender to a legal Correction will do towards the Recovering the poor Captive out of the Snare of the Devil, and bringing him to a right mind? And does not the neglect of doing this, the ſuffering him to go on in his wicked Courſes, to the manifeſt danger of the Ruine of his Temporal and Eternal Intereſt, rather than the bringing him to wholſome Puniſhment, ſeem rather an Argument of fooliſh Pity, than of Love; of a cruel and treacherous Fondneſs, than real Kindneſs? We do not think it an expreſſion of Kindneſs to our deareſt Relations, that are lying under dangerous Diſtempers, to chuſe rather to ſee them quietly die, than to uſe Medicines that will give them more Pain and Diſturbance, but are proper for the Recovering them. And it is not the leſs Kindneſs to them becauſe in their deſperate and delirous Fits they have not a Sence of the Good we intend them by it, but refuſe the Remedy, and perhaps fly in the Face of the Phyſician; nay, when Inciſions are neceſſary, when a Member is to be cut off to prevent a Gangreen, we tie them down, and their Cries and Reproaches of hardſhip and ill uſage, tho' they are in their Senſes, do not hinder the Operation. And have we not ſo much Compaſſion for thoſe miſerable Creatures who have little or no true Compaſſion for themſelves, that lie under the Lethargy of Sin, whereby their Souls are in ſo great

great and evident danger of being for ever loſt, to endeavour, by the Magiſtrates Puniſhment of them, to ſcarifie and awaken them out of their deadly Sleep, to a Senſe of their dangerous Condition? and the Conſideration of it, which may have its beginning in the Fear of the Law, that they are driven to by the Shame and Puniſhment that is thereby brought upon them, may be a Means of working the happieſt Effects, may end in their heartily embracing wholeſome Counſels. And will not they then think, that they that brought them to legal Correction did them a Kindneſs, how grievous ſoever it was to them when it was upon them; and that it was happy for them that they met with that Puniſhment that led them to Wiſdom? and when this Method for the good of our Neighbour's Soul fails, we may, as after the uſe of other proper means for the Cure of his Body, tho' without Effect, reaſonably give our ſelves ſome ſatisfaction upon this Conſideration alone: But, in the next place, this Practice is however a high Service to the Community; for *Religion* being every Man's great Intereſt, every one's Work or Duty, *the Community, according to the Senſe of the Civil Law, is injured by the Contempt that is flung upon it, by the open Affronts and Violations of it, which every Man, as in a common Cauſe, is therefore concerned to prevent. Now the Exemplary Puniſhment of open Offenders is the proper way (as Reaſon and Experience may convince us) to repreſs publick Vice and Prophaneneſs, to keep the Generality from it, and to prevent God's Diſhonour. It is, I conceive, one way moreover to keep us from being *Partakers in other Mens Sins*, and to take away National Guilt; for a Nation is then ſuppoſed to contract publick Guilt when Wickedneſs is publick and inſolent, when the Supream or Subordinate Magiſtrates and Miniſters do, by their own ill Examples, and by their not Exerciſing their Power or Authority, countenance and confirm Men in it, and the Body of the People

* Religio contaminata ad omnium pertinet Injuriam.

People have no concern for the Suppreſſing of it: But a Nation is not thought to draw upon it that publick Guilt which calls for National Puniſhment by the private Sins of particular Perſons, which could not be prevented by either the Magiſtrates, Miniſters, or the Peoples Care and Endeavours; much of which ſeem to be intimated to us, as from other Texts of Scripture, ſo particularly from theſe following: *The hands of the Witneſſes ſhall be firſt upon him to put him to Death, and afterward the hands of all the People. So thou ſhalt put the Evil away from among you.* Deut. 17. 7. *And all the People ſhall hear, and fear, and do no more preſumptuouſly.* Ver. 13. *Then ſhall his Father and his Mother lay hold on him, and bring him unto the Elders of his City, and unto the Gate of his Place: And they ſhall ſay unto the Elders of his City, This our Son is ſtubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our Voice; he is a Glutton and a Drunkard. And all the Men of his City ſhall ſtone him with Stones that he die: So ſhalt thou put Evil away from among you, and all Iſrael ſhall hear, and fear.* Deut. 21. 19. Ver. 20. Ver. 21. Where we may obſerve, that for the ſuppreſſing of Sin, and the preventing of publick Guilt, even Parents were commanded to bring their own Children to be puniſhed with Death, if after they were corrected by them for Gluttony and Drunkenneſs, &c. they were not amended by it.

If then the Puniſhment of Offenders, by the Execution of the Laws againſt Debauchery and Prophaneneſs, is neceſſary to the Suppreſſing of Vice, and thoſe Laws will not be generally Executed unleſs Perſons acquaint Magiſtrates with the Breaches of them; if thoſe that do ſo exerciſe Charity to the Souls of the Offenders, take a proper Courſe thereby to avoid a Participation in their Guilt, to make a Proviſion for the Wants of the Poor, to promote a general Reformation of Manners, to remove National Guilt, and prevent God's Judgments falling upon the Body of a People, can any wiſe and good Men, that duly conſider theſe things, conclude, that they that zealouſly, and upon proper

Occa-

Occaſions, give Informations to the Magiſtrates of the crying Enormities of this Kingdom, do that which is not agreeable to their Profeſſion, as becomes Chriſtians, or as good Members of the Community? nay, that conſidering our preſent Circumſtances, there is ſo little probability that a general Reformation of Manners will be carried on without it, Whether they are not almoſt, if not altogether as neceſſary for this purpoſe as our Statute-Book, I was like to have ſaid, as even our Magiſtracy? And then, laſtly, can any wiſe and unprejudiced Men think, that ſuch ſerviceable Perſons as theſe, that often expoſe themſelves to Inconveniencies in diſcharging this Office for Conſcience-ſake, which may be perhaps the moſt difficult and invidious, and therefore a highly honourable part in this arduous Work of Reformation, do not deſerve great Reſpect, and good Words at leaſt from thoſe, who, tho' they have juſt thoughts of the Reaſonableneſs and Neceſſity of it, have not Zeal enough themſelves to diſcharge it? and the good Words that are given them, and the Reſpect that is paid them upon this account, may, in many Caſes, be a means of furthering this Work, which are ſuch cheap and ſafe things, that, 'tis to be hoped, they will not be thought too much to be afforded by the moſt faint-hearted Chriſtian that is willing to contribute any Endeavours towards it; which, it may be expected, thoſe that deſerve the Name of Chriſtians will. For tho' thoſe brave Men are thus willing to expoſe themſelves, often to Reproach and Hardſhips from bad Men, for ſuch noble purpoſes, it will, I think, notwithſtanding, conſidering the Infirmities of Humane Nature, and the Wickedneſs of this Nation; be our Prudence and Religion to endeavour, by all proper Methods, to prevent their being put too much upon the Tryal of Sufferings from profligate Men, which, 'tis ſelf-evident, our particular countenance of them, and ſpeaking well of their Actions upon all due Occaſions, will effectually do. Our Laws

ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe ſuch Men thus highly uſeful, as clear Reaſon tells us they are, for the Promotion of Virtue, and indeed for the Preſervation of any Government. Her late Majeſty of Glorious Memory, in purſuance of Her great Deſign of *Reforming the Nation*, did therefore in Her Gracious *Letter* to the Juſtices of *Middleſex*, *Command them to give Encouragement to thoſe Perſons that ſhould bring them Informations of theſe Offences*; and the Juſtices of *Middleſex*, the Magiſtrates of *London*, and of divers other Cities of the Kingdom, from a ſenſe of the great Service that is done the Publick by ſuch Perſons giving Informations, or rather, as may be ſuppoſed, from the abſolute Neceſſity of it, do in their Printed Orders invite thoſe that are Well-wiſhers to their Countrey, to bring them Informations of the Breaches of the Laws againſt *Prophaneneſs* and *Immorality*, and tell them 'tis their Duty to do it, and promiſe to give them Encouragement. And now, laſtly, His Majeſty by His *Proclamation* does command all *Judges, Mayors, Sheriffs, Juſtices of the Peace, and all other Officers and Miniſters, both Eccleſiaſtical and Civil, and all his Subjects, whom it may concern, to be very* **Vigilant** *and* **Strict** *in the* **Diſcovery**, *and the* **effectual Proſecution** *and* **Puniſhment** *of all Perſons who ſhall be guilty of Exceſſive Drinking, Blaſphemy, Prophane Swearing and Curſing, Lewdneſs, Prophanation of the Lord's-Day, &c. as they will anſwer it to Almighty God, and upon pain of his higheſt Diſpleaſure.* So that thoſe who oppoſe the giving of *Informations* in theſe Caſes, not only ſeem directly to ſtrike at the Foundation of our Conſtitution, but do oppoſe Reformation, and confront the Government, which are Enormities that demand a due Reſentment from all that are concerned for the Honour of our Government, our Laws, or our Religion. And if any Magiſtrates ſhould diſcourage thoſe that bring them Informations on this Occaſion, by giving them hard Words, making their Work as difficult to them as they can, by

wilfully forcing them to long and unneceſſary Attendance on them in this Buſineſs, or not ſheltring them from the Inſults of obſtinate Offenders, if any ſhould be ſo inſolent and daring as to offer them, 'tis, I think, evident, that they not only act therein contrary to their Duty, as Chriſtians, but to their Oaths and Truſts, as Magiſtrates, and to their Pretenſions of Loyalty and Obedience to the Government, as Subjects. And now, is it poſſible to conceive that any Magiſtrates can deſire the Execution of thoſe Laws; nay, that any that are not the greateſt Enemies to it, and are loſt to all ſenſe of true Honour as well as Conſcience, ſhould, in defiance of all their Obligations, and in full Contradiction to their printed Orders with their Names to them, publickly ſet up by their Direction on Churches and other publick Places, not treat with Reſpect, and give the greateſt Encouragement to thoſe excellent Perſons, particularly by making this Buſineſs as eaſie to them as they can, by protecting them from any kind of Affronts and Aſſaults from wicked Men, and giving them all poſſible diſpatch, who in ſuch a profligate Age do, for the preventing the Indignities that are offered to the Great God of Heaven and Earth, and the Ruine of their Country, bring them, generally with trouble, and ſometimes with great difficulty, Informations of ſuch Offences? And, on the other hand, I do not ſee, generally ſpeaking, how thoſe that are convinced that the giving of Informations to Magiſtrates of theſe Offences is a Chriſtian Office, a likely and proper, if not a neceſſary means of *Reformation of Manners*, and yet wholly neglect the doing it at a time when they ſee their Fellow-Chriſtians engaging ſucceſsfully in it, can in ordinary Caſes eaſily ſatisfie themſelves that they have a due Zeal for God's Honour, or Charity to their Neighbours. 'Tis allowed, that this will be ſometimes done with ſome Danger and Inconvenience, * but ſo much the more laudable is the doing of it. A brave

* Dulce eſt periculum ſequi Deum.

Man

Man, who refuſes to live under the ſlaviſh Dominion of Cuſtom and Example, who frequently works againſt Wind and Tide, and ſteers in the Teeth of Danger, muſt expect to be ſometimes toſt and batter'd; but Dangers and Difficulties do often invite, rather than diſcourage ſuch a one from doing that which becomes him. Virtue could, I think, be hardly diſtinguiſhed from a kind of Senſuality, if it were gained without any Labour. Every mean Soul can do ſuch things as require no Reſolution or Courage, that are not attended with any Trouble or Inconvenience; but tho' there has never been ſo general a Corruption in any Age or Nation, as that there have not been ſome conſpicuous for their Piety, yet the Number of thoſe wiſe and happy Perſons have, in moſt Ages of the World, been too few, who have preferred their Duty to all other Conſiderations. If 'tis not generally thought faſhionable to Inform, let it be conſider'd, whether 'tis faſhionable to be Religious. Don't Men uſually meet with the reproachful Names of Hypocrites, Fools, Enthuſiaſts, Phanaticks, or formal and preciſe Perſons, who lead Chriſtian, or but modeſt and regular Lives? But thoſe Men that underſtand what Religion is do not ſurely think this a ſufficient Diſpenſation for them to be Libertines. They know that *Eliſha* and St. *Paul* were called Mad-Men; that Holy *David* was derided by the People; that *Chriſt*, his *Apoſtles*, and the *Chriſtians* in the firſt Ages, were treated accordingly. Wiſe Men and Chriſtians are not ſo much afraid of ill Names, as of wicked Actions: And our Judgment of Actions muſt not be taken from the Opinions of Men, but from the Nature of them, otherwiſe the Notions of *Good* and *Evil* will be ſoon confounded. Thoſe Actions are diſhonourable that carry in their nature a Repugnancy to Reaſon and Religion; but if thoſe Actions that directly tend to preſerve and ſtrengthen Government, to promote Religion, and the good of Mankind, be honourable,

nourable, then the giving of Informations upon theſe Occaſions, that are ſo much countenanced and encouraged by the Government and the Laws, are, I conceive, truly honourable, tho' corrupt Men judge otherwiſe; * ſuch, for inſtance, who think it more honourable to reſent an Affront with the loſs of their own or their Fellow-Chriſtians Lives, and reckon, in ſhort, Temperance and Chaſtity, Meekneſs and Humility, Zeal for God, and Heavenly-mindedneſs, contemptible Qualities, and fit for mean and baſe Souls. Let it be remembred, that Chriſtians are *to walk by Faith, and not by Sight*; * by Precepts, and not by Examples; that 'tis to the Great GOD of Heaven and Earth, *Who judgeth Righteouſly*, and with whom *the Wiſdom of this World is Fooliſhneſs*, and not to a ſinful Generation (that in divers Inſtances that might be mentioned, calls *Evil, Good; and Good, Evil*) that we are to approve our ſelves. So that putting this Caſe at that Diſadvantage as the cowardly and formal Chriſtian (who will not fail to raiſe Objections, and ſtart Difficulties on ſuch an occaſion) would have it, and will be ſure himſelf to do, ſuppoſing that the giving of *Informations* of theſe Offences ſhould ſometimes expoſe Men to reproachful Words, or rude Treatment from an *ill Magiſtrate*, or a profligate Offender, which it will not be for the Honour of any Government to countenance, 'tis the Buſineſs, I think, of Chriſtians to conſider, whether they ought not to ſuffer Shame, and undergo ſome Trouble and Loſs for the Exerciſing an Act of Charity to their Neighbours Souls, for the ſuppreſſing of *National Sins*, the preventing of *God's Diſhonour*, and the Ruine of their *Country*, now eſpecially that their Endeavours of this kind will be ſo very likely to be effectual for theſe ends. ℣ The Work is unqueſtionably good, and we are told in the Holy Scriptures, That *'tis good to be zealouſly affected always in a good thing*: That we ſhould *be fruitful in every good Work*: That *Chriſt gave himſelf for us*, that

* Apud quos virtus inſania & furor eſſe dicitur.

* Non Exemplis, ſed Legibus judicandum.

1 Cor. 3. 19.

Gal. 4. 18.
Col. 1. 10.
Tit. 2. 14.

that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works. And we are further told by our Blessed Saviour, That because his Disciples *were not of the World, but he had Chosen them out of the World, therefore the World hated them, as it hated him.* And by the Apostle, That all *that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer Persecution*; which, I think, Christians in this Age experience in some degree, as well as they did in the times of Persecution. For do we not see the faithful Servants of God frequently suffering Injuries from wicked Men? we see them calumniated, derided and contemned by them, and exposed to many Assaults and Sufferings from them for the sake of their Religion. Their holy Lives they are sensible do reproach them, which is very grievous to them, and for this Cause they often, I suppose, bear a Hatred to them, which puts them upon seeking Opportunities, which they soon enough find, to injure them, either in their Goods, in their Bodies or in their Reputation, of which there is given us in the Book of *Wisdom*, a very lively Description; *Let us lie in wait for the Righteous, because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our doings: he upbraideth us with our offending the Law. He was made to reprove our Thoughts. He is grievous unto us even to behold; for his Life is not like other Mens, his ways are of another fashion. We are esteemed of him as Counterfeits: he abstaineth from our Ways as from Filthiness: he pronounceth the End of the Just to be blessed, and maketh his boast that God is his Father. Let us see if his Words be true, and let us prove what shall happen in the End of him: Let us examine him with Despitefulness and Torture, that we may know his Meekness, and prove his Patience. Let us condemn him with a shameful Death: for by his own saying he shall be respected.* But in the fifth Chapter there is a Representation of the different State of the Righteous and the Ungodly, among whom those that are either for or against *Reformation* will find themselves one day ranked, either to their unspeakable Com-

Joh. 15. 18, 19.

2 *Tim.* 3. 12.

Wisd. 2. 12.

Ver. 14.

Ver. 19.

fort

fort or Misery, that may be so much more Encouraging to good Men, than the other Account may to any appear uncomfortable, that I shall give the Reader at the same time some View likewise of it. *Then shall the Righteous Man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his Labours. When they see it they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his Salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. And they repenting, and groaning for anguish of Spirit, shall say within themselves, This was he whom we had sometimes in Derision, and a Proverb of Reproach. We Fools accounted his Life Madness, and his End to be without Honour. How is he numbred among the Children of God, and his Lot is among the Saints? We wearied our selves in the way of Wickedness and Destruction: yea, we have gone through Deserts, where there lay no way: but as for the Way of the Lord we have not known it. What hath Pride profited us! Or what good hath Riches with our Vaunting brought us! All those things are passed away like a Shadow, and as a Post that hasted by. For the Hope of the Ungodly is like Dust that is blown away with the Wind: But the Righteous live for evermore, their Reward also is with the Lord, the Care of them is with the most High. Therefore they shall receive a Glorious Kingdom,* &c.

Wisd. 5. 1. *Ver.* 7. *Ver.* 15.

If then Wicked Men have such an Enmity to the Righteous, and do by various ways often injure and oppress them, it is no wonder that the giving of *Informations* should, as well as other Christian Offices or Duties sometimes do, make Men liable to Opposition and Sufferings from bad Men, who desire to indulge themselves quietly in their Vices, because this is a downright disturbing and confronting them in their vicious Practises: But 'tis, as hath been said, our Business to consider, that the Christian Life is a Warfare, that Christians are sent into the World, as Soldiers into the Field, to fight against it, the Flesh, and the Devil; and that as a Captain is tryed in a Battle, an expert Seaman in a Storm, so a Christian by the

the Temptations of all kinds that he meets with in his Warfare, by which we are diſciplined or catechized for a happy Eternity; and that therefore he muſt march on through all Difficulties and Diſcouragements, * particularly through good and bad Report, to Immortality; and therefore whether the danger of our being expoſed to Reproach and Contempt from wicked Men is a ſufficient Reaſon for our having no regard to this Charitable Office I am recommending? The Heathen Emperour, *Marcus Antoninus*, could tell us, *That in purſuit of Virtue we muſt expect Reproaches and Contumelies; but that we muſt have little or no regard to the common Opinions of Men*, which, after *Socrates*, he reckoned as the common Bugbears of the World, or the Terrour of Children. And *Seneca* in like manner, That Men will ſometimes (which he thought the laſt Act of Deſperation) reproach, hate, and perſecute even Virtue it ſelf; * *and that he ſeemed to have the greateſt Value for, or devotedneſs to Virtue, that loſeth the Reputation of being Virtuous to avoid the being otherwiſe.* In truth, I think 'tis much to be feared, but being very unwilling to fall under the too common Errour of not duly conſidering Humane Frailties and Prejudices, or to advance poſitively any Opinion that may juſtly bear a diſpute with any but thoſe that bring the Reaſon of Mankind and Religion its ſelf into diſpute, (as I hope will appear throughout theſe Sheets) I ſubmit it to the Judgment of the Caſuiſts, That tho' the former general Negligence of good Men in this Matter may, and indeed, I think, muſt in Charity be ſuppoſed to have been very much owing to a Diſcouragement from Magiſtrates, to private Perſons Ignorance of the Methods of performing this Office, or ſingle Perſons deſpairing of doing thereby much Service for the Ends before-mentioned, under the diſmal State this Nation was in the two laſt Reigns; If this Negligence is continu'd, after this Matter is plainly laid before us, the giving of *Informations* is now more generally inſiſted on by

* Per infamiam & bonam famam graſſari ad Immortalitatem.

* Nemo mihi videtur pluris æſtimare virtutem, nemo illi magis eſſe devotus, quàm qui boni viri famam perdidit, ne conſcientiam perderet, *Sen. Epiſt.* 81.

by our Clergy in their Sermons, eſpecially at thoſe ſtated times that they are required to read the *Act of Parliament* againſt Swearing and Curſing, with the other *Statutes* againſt Prophaneneſs and Vice, by His Majeſty's *Letter*, and His late Gracious *Proclamation* for the enforcing the Execution of them; and we have moreover ſuch a change of Circumſtances, and ſuch favourable Occurrences, as that our Diligence in giving Informations will at this time ſo effectually promote a *National Reformation*, (as it is evident it will do from what is already done by it) that it will be generally found, notwithſtanding the Objections and plauſible Pretences that will be made on this Occaſion by many for their being excuſed from it, to proceed frequently, if not generally, from worſe Cauſes, that we are either afraid or aſhamed of diſcharging it, from a want of Faith, or of Love to God and our Neighbour, not duly conſidering the Admonition, *Fear ye not the Reproach of Men, neither be afraid of his Revilings.* That the *Fearful* and *Unbelieving* are joined together with thoſe who *ſhall have their part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimſtone*; nor the Extent of our Saviour's Threatning, *Whoſoever therefore ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the Holy Angels:* Nor, laſtly, the great Encouragement given in the Word of God to thoſe that ſuffer for diſcharging of their Duty, *Bleſſed are they which are Perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and Eternal Weight of Glory. If any Man ſuffer as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed; but let him glorifie God on this behalf. Wherefore let them that ſuffer according to the Will of God, commit the keeping of their Souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creatour.* And now, if notwithſtanding what hath been ſaid,

Iſaiah 51. 7.

Rev. 21. 18.

Mark 8. 38.

Matth. 5. 10.

2 *Cor.* 4. 17.

1 *Pet.* 4. 16.

1 *Pet.* 4. 19.

ſaid, or that may be urged by our Clergy with more Advantage in their Diſcourſes, for our giving Informations againſt prophane and vicious Perſons, and the Magiſtrates Diligence and Faithfulneſs that was before inſiſted on, this criminal Fear and Shame ſhall ſo generally prevail, as to keep private Perſons from giving Informations in theſe Caſes, and ſhall likewiſe keep Magiſtrates (who have leſs colour of Excuſe for their Unfaithfulneſs, they being under the Obligations of Oaths and Truſts, ſuper-added to thoſe they have as Chriſtians) from uſing their Diligence in the Execution of the Laws, and particularly from giving all Countenance and juſt Encouragement to thoſe who bring them Informations, at the ſame time that Prophaneneſs and Debauchery do appear ſo ſhameleſs and fearleſs among us, what a weight of Guilt may be ſuppoſed to lie upon this Nation? And in how great danger of Miſery and Deſtruction may it be apprehended to be, which I do not ſee with what Reaſon we can expect will ſo likely be prevented by any other Means, as by the cloſe Conjunction, the zealous and united Endeavours of good Men, for the Retrieving of Religion, and the Morals of the Nation, by all Chriſtian and Prudent Methods. For Religion in general, and the Practice of every Moral Virtue in particular, do in their own Nature tend not only to the Felicity of every Man's private Life, but do alſo conduce to the Peace, Order and Welfare of all publick Societies, and good Government over Men, as it hath the greateſt Influence for theſe Ends upon Magiſtrates and Subjects. Religion teaches and obliges Governours to over-rule their Subjects in the Fear of God, to his Glory, and for the Safety and Proſperity of thoſe that are in Subjection to them; and therefore, I think, to endeavour to ſupport and encourage them in the Exerciſe of Religion and Virtue, and this as well by the Uſe of their Authority, (which may, for inſtance, be expreſſed by their Perſonally Countenancing and Promoting

Men of Virtue, and Discountenancing vicious Men, by their taking Care that good Laws be made for the Security of Religion; and that the Laws that are made for the Promotion of Christian Virtues, and the Suppression of Vice, be put in Execution) as by their own Exemplary Behaviour, * which hath a wonderful force, is as it were a living Law, and Religion instills in Subjects such Principles and Dispositions as in their own nature tend to make themselves happy, as well as a Government strong and prosperous: It instructs and obliges them to obey Magistrates, not only for Fear, but out of Conscience. And as Piety and Virtue do thus evidently conduce to the Stability and Happiness of any Kingdom and Government; so Vice and Irreligion, in the natural consequences of them, tend to bring Decay and Ruine upon them, as they unqualifie Magistrates for Government, and make * Subjects unfit for Commands, averse to all good Order, and destructive instead of helpful Members of a Community; from whence † *Plutarch* might justly esteem it the Foundation or Cement of Humane Society; * *Plato* conclude, That in the Institution of Magistracy the first and chief Care should be of Religion; and the Famous † *Scipio* observe, That it was impossible any City should stand if their Manners were depraved, tho' their Walls were never so firm. Accordingly, I conceive, there have been but few, if any, amongst the ancient and celebrated Legislators and States-Men, whatever there have been among our Modern, who have not had the greatest Regard to Religion in the Modelling and Governing of Civil Societies; for how is it possible to conceive that any State should long stand and be prosperous without Honesty or Peace? * Or that it should either enjoy a lasting Peace, or have a general Honesty, without Religion? and therefore it was no weak, tho' a wicked piece of Policy which they tell us of a King of *Assyria*, *who chose rather*

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* Non sic inflectere sensus humanos edictavalent, ut vita regentis. Qui Macedoniæ regem erudit, omnes etiam subditos erudit. Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.

* Homo sine Religione, sicut equus sine frœno.

† Συνεκτικὸν ἁπάσης κοινωνίας καὶ νομοθεσίας ἔρεισμα.

* In Magistratuum institutione prima sit cura de Religione.

Τοὺς πολίτας θεραπεύειν ὡς βελτίστους αὐτοὺς τοὺς πολίτας ποιοῦντας.

† Sine mœnibus Civitas potest stare, sine virtute nullo modo potest.

* Religio neglecta maximam pestem in Civitatem infert, omnium scelerum fenestram aperit.

to endeavour to overcome the City of Babylon, *by ſending in of Players, Lewd Women, &c. to debauch it*, (by which means he effectually did it, and at laſt obtained his End) *than to invade it with a powerful Army.* Upon the whole Matter, We may dare to challenge all the Politicians in the World to form a ſound Scheme of Government without ſuppoſing and ſecuring Religion for the Baſis of it. And as we never heard of a Government that publickly declared for *Immorality*, ſo if we could ever ſuppoſe there ſhould be any ſuch, nay, that there were ſuch a one, where a conſiderable Number of ſuch Monſters ſhould obtain and keep the Aſcendency in any Government, we might conclude what its Fate would ſooner or later be. *For when Religion is deſpis'd, and Virtue is loſt in a Nation, which, as hath been proved, would in time be the conſequence of a publick Contempt of it, how eaſie a Prey will it prove to its Neighbours? Or how unavoidably will it fall into Diviſions, Confuſion and Ruine of it ſelf?

* Accidit Magiſtratuũ negligentia, & vitiis Nobiliũm, cives paulatim à virtute deſciſcunt, variiſque malis rempublicam afficiunt, quibus inundatis rempublicam fluctuare neceſſe eſt.

Of ſuch conſequence therefore Religion and Virtue ſeems plainly to be to a Nation, abſtracting from the Conſideration of a Juſt God that rules in the Kingdoms of the Earth, that rewards Righteous Nations with Proſperity, and executes Juſtice upon thoſe that are Wicked, which we muſt believe if we have any due regard to Sacred or Prophane Hiſtory, to the Experience and Suffrage of all Ages of the World. For thus it is ſaid in the Holy Scriptures, to this purpoſe, *The Nation and Kingdom that will not ſerve thee, ſhall periſh: yea, thoſe Nations ſhall be utterly waſted.* *Righteouſneſs exalteth a Nation, but Sin is a Reproach to any People.* *A fruitful Land he turneth into Barrenneſs for the Wickedneſs of them that dwell therein.* And by the Account that is given us in the Word of God of the Divine Juſtice, of God's charging Guilt upon Nations, as well as upon particular Perſons, and of his Proceeding with the Old World, the *Jewiſh* Nation, *&c.* have we not ſufficient Reaſon to think, that in the

Iſaiah 60. 12.

Prov. 14 34.

Pſal. 107. 33, 34.

ordinary Courſe of God's Providence, a Nation that is eminently Righteous ſhould have his Bleſſing in an eminent manner; and that a Nation that is remarkably Wicked will feel, ſooner or later, the Effects of his Diſpleaſure? We are acquainted, that before God
Gen. 6. 5. deſtroyed the Old World, *He ſaw that the Wickedneſs of*
Ver. 12. *Man was great in the Earth.* That *all Fleſh had corrupted his Way upon Earth.* And their Sin is given as the
Ver. 13. Reaſon of their Deſtruction. *And God ſaid unto Noah, The End of all Fleſh is come before me, for the Earth is filled with Violence through them: and behold, I will deſtroy them with the Earth.* Accordingly we may obſerve, that the Providences of God towards the *Jewiſh* Nation were very eminently ſuited to their Behaviour: That tho' the *Jews* were the peculiar People of God, and highly bleſſed, they were frequently puniſhed by God, and at laſt deſtroyed for their Sins. That their Kings, the chief of their Prieſts, and their People, did wickedly, and after the way of the Heathen, before they were led into Captivity, and Crucified the *Lord of Life,*
Mat. 27. 25. *whoſe Blood they called for upon themſelves and their Children,* before they were finally deſtroyed: And as
Mat. 24. Mark 23. their Deſtruction, which our Saviour plainly foretold, is, I think, agreed on all hands to have been one of the moſt dreadful inſtances of Miſery that have been known to have befallen any Nation either before
Lib. 6. cap. 11. or ſince that time: So *Joſephus*, tho' a *Jew*, a celebrated Hiſtorian, thus ſays, *That as he thought no Nation ever ſuffered ſuch things; ſo no Nation, from the beginning of the World, did ever ſo abound in all manner of Impiety;* to which Chriſtians in this Age may juſtly add, That by their continuing for ſo many Hundred Years to be a deſpiſed and vagabond People, and ſcattered throughout the World, without City or Country, without Temple or Altar that we know of, no Nation ſeems ever to have been

been ſo terrible and laſting a Monument of God's Diſpleaſure for National Sin, as that which this People was guilty of ſeems to be ſo much greater, and to have higher Aggravations than the Sin of any other Nation. The Holy Scriptures give the like Account of the Deſtruction of *Damaſcus*; *Thus ſaith the Lord, For three Tranſgreſſions of Damaſcus, and for four, I will not turn away the Puniſhment thereof*; ſo of *Gaza*, of *Tyrus*, of *Edom*, and of *Ammon*. And that God raiſed up *Cyrus*, calling him by his Name before he was in being, for the Puniſhment of the Sins of *Babylon*. *Thus ſaith the Lord to his Anointed, to Cyrus, whoſe Right-hand I have holden to ſubdue Nations before him: and I will looſe the Loins of Kings to open before him the two-leaved Gates, and the Gates ſhall not be ſhut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places ſtraight. For Jacob my Servant's ſake, and Iſrael my Elect, I have even called thee by thy Name: I have ſurnamed thee tho' thou haſt not known me.* And does not Prophane Hiſtory tell us, among a Multitude of other Inſtances that might be heaped up, That as the *Pride* and *Voluptuouſneſs* of the *Babylonians*, ſo the *Lewdneſs* of the *Perſians*, and the *Luxury* of the *Greeks*, were, with their other Sins, the remarkable Cauſes of the Ruine of thoſe Empires: And that the *Romans*, who had been a People ſo eminent in their *Morals*, that * St. *Auſtin* thought that God might allow them the Government of the World for the Reward of their Virtue, even under the Advantages of the *Chriſtian Religion* became ſo very *Degenerate* and *Debauched* before the Devaſtations and Ruine of their Empire by the poor *Goths*, *Vandals*, and *Huns*, one of whoſe chief Leaders called himſelf *Flagellum Dei*, the *Scourge of God*, that gave Occaſion to a Father to cry out, † *That the Name of Chriſt became a Scorn, and the Chriſtian Religion was reproached by the Lives of Chriſtians.* And to take ſome Notice of our own Country, Do not the Hiſtorians of it acquaint us, that the *Britains*, the ancient

Amos 1. 3.

Ver. 6, 9, 11, 13.

Iſa. 45. 1.

Ver. 2.

Ver. 4.

* Non eſt quod de ſummi & veri Dei juſtitia conquerantur; perceperunt mercedem ſuam. *lib.* 5. *de Civ. Dei, cap.* 15.

† In nobis patitur Chriſtus opprobrium, in nobis patitur lex chriſtiana maledictum, *Salvian.*

cient Inhabitants of it, * who had been remarkable for the Uncorruptneſs of their Manners, were degenerated from the † Simplicity and Sobriety of their Anceſtours, and were for that Reaſon fore-warned of their Miſery before the *Romans* invaded them; and that after the *Romans* quitted their Country there ſucceeded a great Licentiouſneſs; very many after their embracing the *Chriſtian Religion* turning *Idolaters*, before the *Saxons* Invaſion of them, a poor People, but it ſeems of more honeſt Manners, that came from the *Northern* Parts of *Germany*; and that before their next ſad Cataſtrophe by the *Normans* Conqueſt of this Nation, Piety and all good Literature were grown out of faſhion; that the *Clergy* could ſcarce read Divine Service; that the *Gentry* were given up to Luxury, and a diſſolute Life, and the *Meaner* ſort ſpent all they had in Rioting, Drunkenneſs, and other Vices, by which means (ſaith the Hiſtorian) Duke *William* had ſo great Advantage, and gained the Conqueſt of them; from whence our *Engliſh* Writers conclude the *Saxon* Hiſtory almoſt in the ſame Words, and to this effect; *If theſe* (ſay they, ſpeaking of their Sins) *were in all probability the Cauſes of God's Judgments on our Anceſtours, ſurely every one in this corrupt Age ought to take care to avoid them, leſt the ſame Judgments fall upon them.* And are not, laſtly, to add no more, not only the formerly famous *Aſian* and *Greek* Churches, but too many of the *Proteſtant* in ſeveral Parts of the World, particularly that of *France*, *Piemont*, *Hungary*, and the *Palatinate*, ſome whereof are miſerably oppreſſed, and others brought almoſt to Deſolation within a few Years paſt, and among them that eſpecially of *France*, of whoſe dreadful Miſery we have ſo many living Teſtimonies now among us, ſad Inſtances to confirm us in the Opinion of all Ages, That Religion and Virtue are the only firm Foundation for the Proſperity of any Nation, and Irreligion the moſt fatal Evil to it; That where there is a general Cor-

ruption

* Incolæ aborigines moribus ſimplices integrique exiſtunt, longè à noſtrorum hominum aſtutia verſutiaque remoti, *Diodorus Siculus.*

† Incolarum mores quod attinet; fuerunt antiqui Britanni religionis & diſciplinarum cultores maximi, *Rob. Sheringham, de Anglorum gentis origine, p.* 14. *Gildas de Excid. Britannorum.*

ruption of Manners things tend to a Diſſolution and Ruine, as well by Natural conſequences, with the Permiſſion of God, as by his righteous Judgments; and that therefore it is not to be expected that the crying Sins of a Nation will always eſcape Puniſhment unleſs prevented by Repentance; for the ſame Cauſes produce the ſame Effects, Virtue and Vice do not change their Nature, and *there is no Variableneſs with our God, whoſe Juſtice is immutable. Did not our Fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this Evil upon us, and upon this City?* ſays the Prophet. And therefore, if after all that our Fathers have told us of the fatal Effects of Sin, and that ſome of us have moreover ſeen with our own Eyes; I mean the late terrible Civil Wars, which, I hope, none will believe for our Piety and Virtue broke out, and laſted ſo long among us within ſome of our Memories, and which was ſoon after ſucceeded with a dreadful Fire and Plague in this City, and the Miſery that is ſince that fallen upon our Fellow-Chriſtians in *France*, and upon ſo many other *Proteſtant* Churches about us, we make no better uſe of what we have ſeen and heard, and of the various Providences we have been under, than to oppoſe the deſign of them, by continuing Impenitent, have we not great Reaſon to fear, that God may reſcue his Goſpel from our prophane Outrages, our impious Violations, and give it to ſome other Nation, that may bring forth better Fruits of it, or in ſome other way, agreeable to his infinite Wiſdom and Juſtice, *puniſh us yet ſeven times more for our Sins?* Or as *Ezra* expreſſes it on another like Occaſion; *And after all that is come upon us for our Evil deeds, and for our great Treſpaſs, ſeeing that Thou, our God, haſt puniſhed us leſs than our Iniquities deſerve, and haſt given us ſuch Deliverance as this: Should we again break thy Commandments, and join in Affinity with the People of theſe Abominations, wouldſt not thou be angry with us, till thou hadſt conſumed us, ſo that there ſhould be no remnant nor eſcaping?* The Almighty God can-

Nehem. 13. 18.

Levit. 26. 18.

Ezra 9. 13.

Ver. 14.

cannot want Power to effect our Ruine. If we reckon our ſelves ſecure by our preſent Peace, from a late powerful Enemy, (which I ſhall not here inquire into the Reaſons of) He can raiſe up new ones to us. And if we have no Enemies from Abroad, He can ſuffer us to become our own greateſt Enemies, to fall into Confuſion and Ruine by our unchriſtian Quarrels and ſenſeleſs Diviſions at Home, which are too many and too high to make this appear to thinking Men a foreign Suppoſition, or an unneceſſary Warning. If He ſtops the Influences of Heaven, or lets looſe the Elements upon us, we periſh. A Peſtilence, or a Deluge, an Earthquake, or a Dearth, might ſoon deſtroy us. And if a general Relaxation of Manners, a Corruption in moſt, if not all Orders and Parties; if a viſible Contempt of the ſincere Practice of Religion, and bare-fac'd, inſolent and unreſtrained Wickedneſs; if a monſtrous Debauchery in Principles as well as Practice; if Contentions and Diviſions, without reaſon and without end, and almoſt without Example; if high Ingratitude to God for many and great Mercies, and a deep Inſenſibility under imminent danger of Judgments, are ſad Indications of a Nation's Degeneracy and Guilt, it cannot, I think, be denied, but that this was too near the diſmal Caſe of *England*, in Relation to Religion, when the Endeavours of Reformation, which I have given an Account of, began among us, about Eight Years ſince, how much ſoever we may diſlike the Repreſentation of it, and, to ſpeak plainly, continues very much ſo ſtill; and therefore tho' God may give a People a longer or ſhorter time of Tryal, as ſeems fit to his infinite Wiſdom, He may defer the Execution of his Wrath *till the* Gen. 15. 16. *Iniquities of a People are at the full*, which the longer it is delayed, the ſeverer it may be when it comes: And tho' it is not for us raſhly to ſay when a Nation hath filled up the Meaſure of its Sins, and much leſs to preſume to know the Extent of infinite Patience and Forbearance, yet it may,

I think, be ſaid in this Caſe, with Reverence, that conſidering the great Advantages and Bleſſings we have ſo long enjoyed, and what ſhameful Returns we have made to God for them, there ſeems not much, if any thing more to be wanting, to make this Nation as guilty as moſt under Heaven, if not to be ripe for Judgment, than the Diſcountenance and Unſucceſsfulneſs of pious and laudable Endeavours for the Reforming us; and nothing, I think, can be reaſonably ſuppoſed ſufficient to remove our Guilt, than ſome conſiderable and remarkable Reformation, and perhaps carried through all Ranks and Orders of Men, through all Parts of the Kingdom; ſuch a one as may be in ſome meaſure proportioned to the Leproſie of Vice and Prophaneneſs that hath almoſt overſpread us. But if we do truly repent of all our Abominations, and turn from our wicked ways; if we lay aſide our unneceſſary Strifes, and our unchriſtian Contentions with one another, which we have ſo long felt the diſmal Effects of; if we expreſs our Zeal, and unite our Strength againſt the Patrons of Vice, who are the Enemies of God and Goodneſs, more than againſt thoſe that differ from us in ſome few things, and thoſe of leſſer moment, but agree with us in moſt, if not all of thoſe that are ſubſtantial; if we ſincerely, and without delay, ſet about and further all pious and proper Endeavours for a National Reformation, truly purſue the things that belong to our Peace, it ſtill ſeems with us a Day of Mercy, and the Scriptures give us Encouragement to hope, that *we may not periſh.* For thus it is ſaid, *At what inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to deſtroy it: If that Nation againſt whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to do unto them.* Jer. 18. 7, 8.

Having thus endeavoured to prove the *Common Obligation* which lies upon *All Men*, as Chriſtians, and as Members

of the Community, to uſe their ſincere Endeavours for a General and National Reformation, and the *Special Obligations* of *Governours* and *Miniſters*, of *Subordinate Magiſtrates* and *Inferior Officers*, from either the Nature of their Office and Truſt, or their expreſs Oaths to this purpoſe; and having more largely inſiſted on the Reaſons for *private Perſons* giving of Informations of the Violation of the Laws of Religion and their Country, and the *Magiſtrates Obligation* highly to encourage thoſe who do ſo, to make this their excellent Service to their Country as ſafe and as eaſie to them as they can, by making Examples of any obſtinate Criminals that ſhall dare impiouſly to affront and obſtruct them in it; and having likewiſe repreſented the danger of *God's Judgments*, and of *our utter Ruine*, if we continue unreformed, and the *Bleſſings* and *Advantages* we may hope to obtain to our ſelves, our Country, and our Poſterity, in the hearty forwarding any juſt and pious Deſigns and Endeavours for ſuch a Reformation; as Virtue is the way to the Happineſs of particular Perſons, of private Families, and the Proſperity of Nations; and the Suppreſſing of Vice and Prophaneneſs by Humane Laws, that are agreeable to the Laws of God, is the neareſt and moſt probable way, in our preſent Circumſtances, for the retrieving of the Virtue of the Nation, without which, if we could ſuppoſe that it could continue to be proſperous, I do not eaſily conceive how wiſe and good Men can take either much Pleaſure in Living otherwiſe than in Obedience to the Will, and for the Glory of God, and the working out their own Salvation, or in the Thoughts of leaving behind them a Poſterity, in a Nation, with no more Religion, or even common Honeſty; I intended, I ſay, having done this, in the next place to offer ſome Arguments againſt thoſe Vices that are moſt reigning amongſt us, in hopes that the bare Repreſentation of them in their proper Colours would ſhew ſo much the Deformity of them, that it might

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be a means to keep ſome at leaſt from falling in Love with them, and of diſingaging others from them who are already addicted to them, even as the Sight of a Drunkard to a thinking Man is a good Lecture againſt Drunkenneſs: But theſe Sheets growing to a Bulk, far beyond what I at firſt propoſed, I ſhall lay aſide (perhaps for ſome other Occaſion) the Materials which were prepared for this purpoſe; and I ſhall the rather do ſo, ſince the common Vices of the Age are ſo plainly condemned by the Word of God; and that we find, by ſad Experience, that thoſe who are fully reconciled to their Luſts, who are abandoned to the Conduct of Cuſtom and ill Example, ſeem too generally almoſt deaf to the Calls of Conſcience, to all Repreſentations of this kind, nay often even to the powerful Rhetorick of the Goſpel; at leaſt they frequently make, for want of Conſideration, and other proper means, no great and laſting Impreſſions upon them. And this, I conceive, makes the uſe of other Methods with ſuch Men neceſſary, not only for their own ſakes, but for the publick Safety, that thoſe that are Lethargick, and almoſt *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*, yet having Senſes ſtill to feel the Stroaks of Juſtice, may, tho' never ſo ſtubborn, be bowed in ſome meaſure to diſcipline, and puniſh'd into a better outward Behaviour, if they cannot into ſuch a ſerious Conſideration of their Sin and Folly as may end in an inward and entire Reformation of their Lives, which is by no means to be totally deſpaired of. For as the allowed Habits of theſe Sins exclude Men from the Kingdom of Heaven, in the Opinion of Divines they ought to ſhut out thoſe who are guilty of them from the Communion with the Church on Earth, till they give ſome ſigns of their Repentance, as they would have done if they had lived in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, when ſuch Offenders, which now make too great a part of the viſible Church, were looked on as a kind of Mon-

ſters, and, like putrefy'd Members, were cut off, as being not only extreamly dangerous, but very noiſome to the Body. But till the Eccleſiaſtical Power, which is now ſo weakned, and hath, to ſpeak juſtly, loſt its Credit, is recovered to its Primitive Deſign, and the ancient Diſcipline of the Church is in ſome meaſure reſtored, which, 'tis to be hoped, we ſhall not always think ſufficient, eſpecially under the Reign of our preſent Prince, publickly to lament the loſs of once a Year, in the Office for *Aſh-Wedneſday*, but ſhall in good earneſt endeavour to reſtore; There is, I conceive, evidently greater reaſon to engage the ſecular Arm in this Matter, that thoſe upon whom the gentle Methods of Perſuaſion have no force, and whom the Eccleſiaſtical Power does not and will not take any Notice of, ſhould be ſeverely puniſhed, and reſtrained by the Civil Government; that they ſhould be treated as a ſort of Out-Laws, and as common Enemies to their Country: For publick Immoralities are Offences againſt the Peace and Happineſs of Mankind, againſt the Government and the Law, as well as againſt the Chriſtian Religion, which is not only now incorporated into the Law of the Land, but does above all other things promote the Safety and Proſperity of Government, and of particular Perſons, which Offences of this kind directly tend to the deſtroying of, even to the diſſolving the Band of Humane Society; and if ſo, ſurely it behoves good Men to aſſiſt Magiſtrates in their Endeavours effectually to ſuppreſs them. If bad Men don't approve of theſe Methods, 'tis no wonder; they are Enemies to good Order, Law, and Juſtice, becauſe theſe things are troubleſome to them. There is no doubt but the Gallows is a great Grievance to Murtherers, the Diſcipline of *Bridewell* to Whores, the Pillory to the Perjured, and the Stocks to Drunkards: But ſuch Grievances as theſe are, I conceive, of near as long ſtanding as Government, and will not be thought proper to be laid aſide whilſt it

it lasts, or at least till there is not so much Occasion for them, since, as hath been proved, its Interest and chief Business is to cherish and support Religion, and, by consequence, to take care that it be not treated with any disrespect, particularly, that it be not made the Scorn of any Order or Body of Men, the common Subject of the Prophane Play-Houses, or the Sport of Buffoons; and that the open Violations of it by *Prophane Swearing*, *Drunkenness*, *Lewdness*, *&c.* be suppressed, as all wise Nations, I conceive, have ever done, and ever will do.

Against these Enormities therefore that are the Plagues of Government, the Enemies of our Peace, the Dishonour of our Religion, and the Reproach of our Nation, have the *Societies of Reformation* applied themselves, with so great Success, as to give so very promising hopes as have been represented of a general Concurrence and Union of the Virtuous part of the Nation in the same Design, and, in consequence, of a National Reformation; and, as hath been observed, hath been carried on for above Eight Years with as little or less occasion given to their Enemies of Objection either to the Methods of their Proceedings, or to the Behaviour of the Persons concerned in them, as perhaps have been known in a Matter of the greatest Consequence, where such a number of Persons have been engaged, tho' if the Prudence of some good Men, who are either already engaged, or that shall hereafter be concerned in this Undertaking, is or should be less than their Zeal, it will, I suppose, be far from giving wise and well-meaning Men a Prejudice to the Design it self, or keeping them from Assisting in it. But, blessed be God, a more glorious Prospect hath been lately given us by the *Address* of the late House of Commons to His Majesty, for the Suppressing of *Prophaneness* and *Debauchery*, and His Majestys *Proclamation* in pursuance of it, and His Princely Word in His Gracious *Speech* to both Houses of Parliament. We have now then, 'tis plain, His Majesty's positive Commands,

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together with the concurrent Advice in this Matter of the great Repreſentative Body of the Kingdom, for things lawful, moſt important and neceſſary for the ſtrict Execution of the known Laws of the Land, againſt Prophaneneſs and Immorality, agreeably, I think, to the Word of God, that tells us, That the Magiſtrate *beareth not the Sword in Vain*, That *Rulers are not a Terrour to good Works, but to the evil.* Whoever therefore they are that in this Caſe oppoſe the King's Commands, who either openly obſtruct, or more ſecretly undermine the Endeavours of thoſe who act in this Affair in Obedience to the Will of God, the Command of the King, and for the Good of their Countrey, will, I think, find it ſomewhat difficult to acquit themſelves from great Impiety. And now, Can any that love their God, their Religion, their Country, or their Poſterity, hear of theſe tranſporting things without being affected with greater Joy than any Succeſs their own ſecular Concerns would give them, and without thinking themſelves under high Obligations, after they have pretended to Faſt, and Pray, and Mourn for our publick Sins for ſo many Years paſt, (as moſt, if not all Orders of Men and Parties among us have done) to do what they are able in their ſeveral Stations for the Suppreſſing of *Prophaneneſs* and *Immorality*, and for the perfecting of this great Work of REFORMATION, which, I conceive, it had been our Duty to promote, if we had not met with ſo much Encouragement and Aſſiſtance from our Governours? But how much ſtronger Obligations do now lie upon us to do it? And how ſhameful and inexcuſable will our Neglect of it be, now we have ſuch an Opportunity by His Majeſty's repeated Declarations for our Engaging in it, by the Advances that are already made, and the Methods that are laid, as perhaps may never again be offered us if we neglect this? in Proſecution whereof

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it would, I think, become us to adventure all our deareſt Intereſts in this World, nay, a Thouſand Lives, if we had them to loſe. Behold then a glorious Opportunity for all that make a Profeſſion of Religion, or any Pretence to Virtue, of what Rank ſoever, to ſignalize their Love and Faithfulneſs to their great Lord and Maſter, their Neighbour, and their Country. To all Orders of Men therefore whoſe Service His Majeſty hath required to promote this great, this neceſſary Work, and who would not ſhare in the dreadful Guilt and laſting Infamy of neglecting to promote a *Reformation of Manners*, which now ſeems to be put very much in our power, with God's Bleſſing, to ſee effected, I ask leave, upon theſe Glorious Encouragements, with all due reſpect, to addreſs my ſelf.

To the NOBILITY, that they would be pleaſed to conſider, That true Greatneſs doth not conſiſt in the having of ſwelling Titles, high Places, great Power, or large Territories, which, tho' they may be ſometimes the Reward of virtuous and brave Actions, as they ought to be, are often the Gifts of Nature, and it may be too frequently the Acqueſts of ſuch Crimes as deſerve Puniſhment, inſtead of Recompence: That the Perſons who in all Ages have been moſt beloved and reverenced when Alive, and moſt honoured by wiſe and good Men when Dead, have been thoſe who have been moſt beneficent and ſerviceable to the World; not thoſe who have amaſſed the greateſt Eſtates, and acquired the loftieſt Titles to themſelves; the blind *Heathens* erected not their Altars to thoſe that they thought were not ſome way or other uſeful or ſerviceable to Mankind: That they would therefore be perſwaded that nothing will render them ſo much Bleſſings to their Country, ſo truly noble and eſteemed, as their being Patrons of Religion and Virtue: That they are not in their high Stations too great for that Employment which is the greateſt

Glory

Glory of Princes, to ſet up their Standards for Religion, and declare War againſt Vice and Prophaneneſs, * after the Example, and under the Conduct of ſo great a Prince and Leader, who hath graciouſly declared, in His *Speech* to both Houſes of Parliament, that *He eſteems it one of the greateſt Advantages of Peace that he is now at Leiſure to apply himſelf to the Suppreſſing of Prophaneneſs and Immoralities*; and hath thereby given us reaſon to hope, that he will think it a far greater Glory of his Reign to be an Inſtrument in God's hand of delivering us from the Slavery of our Vices, of making us a virtuous, and, by conſequence, a happy People, than in procuring us any other preſent and ſecular Felicities and Advantages, and at laſt leaving us deluged in ſuch Impieties as Infidels abhor, and which may make God our Enemy, and draw down his Vengeance upon us: That they would for this purpoſe conſider the Force of their Authority, their Intereſt, their Fame, and their Example, and employ, which they cannot without high Ingratitude omit, theſe and the other Advantages they have above Men of lower Ranks, for the Glory of that God by whoſe Permiſſion they have them, for the Noble purpoſes of Oppoſing and Suppreſſing Debauchery and Prophaneneſs, the retrieving the Reputation of Virtue, the furthering the Intereſts of Religion, and the ſaving of their Country, which hath ſeemed to have declared in favour of Vice and Ruine, and thereby approve themſelves to the King, (as He hath now aſſured them they will) to the Wiſe and Virtuous part of the Nation, to their own Conſciences, to their Poſterity, and, above all, to Him that is *Higher than the Higheſt*.

*Haud difficilius eſt errare naturamquam principem ſui diſſimilem formare rempublicam. Quæcunque mutatio in principibus extiterit eandem populo ſecutam.

To the Reverend the CLERGY, That they who are looked upon as the Ambaſſadours of the Great God of Heaven and Earth, and ſent upon the moſt important Buſineſs of *Reconciling Men to God*, and *Watching for their Souls*, and

and have, as I conceive, their Honour, their Dignities, and their Revenues, given them without the common Incumbrances of other Men, in regard to their Sacred Office, and that they may attend without Worldly Cares, and with the greateſt Advantage to their Spiritual Employment, would conſider whether they have not a more favourable Opportunity for the Work of their Miniſtry, and a National Reformation, at this time, than they have had for many years paſt. They cannot, I humbly preſume, but be ſenſible of the moſt deplorable Degeneracy of this Nation, that the great Decay of Religion, and the Leproſie of Vice and Prophaneneſs with which it is almoſt overſpread, does threaten its Ruine; and that they have great reaſon to take to heart the no greater Succeſs of their Endeavours for the Reforming of us; that their Diſcipline, which if it had been in force, might have proved a Bank againſt the Flood of Wickedneſs that is broken in upon us, is now ſo loſt, that it is of little uſe to them for this purpoſe; that there appears too great ground to fear that the Tide of Wickedneſs will not be ſtopped whilſt Religion is openly diſhonoured, Virtue deſpiſed, and Vice and Prophaneneſs are ſo daring and triumphant, that Men commit them not only with Impunity, but glory in them, ſo as to eſteem it an act of Gallantry to ridicule their Sacred Office, to contemn things Sacred, and an Ornament of Style to imprecate Damnation upon themſelves. Is not this a *Time* for them that are Spiritual *Watchmen, and Overſeers of the Flock of Chriſt*, as they have a Concern for God's Honour, and would prevent his Judgments falling upon us; as they would conſult the Honour and Intereſt of their ſacred Order, and their own Reputation, to concur with His Majeſty's pious Declarations for this purpoſe, and cheerfully to embrace the Aſſiſtance of the Civil Power for the Vindicating of the Honour of God's Laws, the Stopping the Avenues to notorious Enormities, the breaking the helliſh Confederacies, and the taking out

of publick View the contagious Examples of bad Men; and by theſe Methods to prepare Men the better for the Reſtoration of *godly Diſcipline*, for the greater Influence of their Doctrine, and good Examples upon their Minds? Is not this a *Time* for them to favour the ſucceſsful Endeavours of the *Societies of Reformation*, which are levell'd at the ſtrong holds of Debauchery; and the *Religious Societies*, that are now ſpreading through the Kingdom, that ſeem ſo directly to tend to the Promoting the Power of Religion, ſo far as they carry on thoſe great Ends, (wherein we may, I think, appeal to the whole Chriſtian World whether they do not do it) and readily to accept of the Aſſiſtance that is now, or hereafter may be given them by Chriſtians of any Denomination, in the common cauſe of Chriſtianity? And if they can think of any other or better Meaſures than thoſe that are recommended in theſe Papers, that may promote the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls, for whom Chriſt died, and their own comfortable Account of themſelves to Him *that will judge the Quick and Dead*, to engage in them without delay, with united Counſels and Endeavours, with double Diligence and Zeal, and in Conjunction with all the various Works of their Miniſtry, among which their going from Houſe to Houſe for the enquiring into the Spiritual State of the Souls of thoſe that are committed to their Charge, and the applying proper Directions, and Encouragements accordingly, in the Judgment of the moſt pious Divines I have ever had the Honour to know, is thought to be a very uſeful Method, is what one of the moſt *Learned Prelates of this Age and Nation hath in his printed Charge to the Clergy of his Dioceſs put them in mind of; and which another of our †Learned Biſhops hath told this Sacred Order, in his *Paſtoral Care*, publiſhed by the particular Approbation of the late Great Primate Arch-Biſhop *Tillotſon*, is to be lookt on as the Foundation (an Exemplary Life being ſuppoſed) on which all the other parts of the Miniſterial Office

* *Biſhop of Worceſter's Charge to the Clergy of his Dioceſs*, p. 25.

† *Biſhop of Salisbury's Paſtoral Care*, p. 207.

Office may be well managed; and which he ſays will ſeem no hard matter to ſuch as have a right ſenſe of their Ordination Vows, of the Dignity of their Function, or the Value of Souls.

To the MAGISTRATES *of all kinds*, That they would make juſt Reflections upon that terrible and laſting Imputation that they do now lie under by His Majeſty's *Proclamation*, (which is to be read *Four* times a Year in all Churches through the Nation) and the *Addreſs* of the late Honourable Houſe of Commons to the King, *of their being ſo great a Cauſe of the Debauchery and Prophaneneſs of the Kingdom, by their ill Example and Negligence in their Office:* That they would conſider, as hath been obſerved, how many Nations have been ruined, and Cities brought to a heap of Rubbiſh for their Immoralities, which the Magiſtrates Vigilance might have prevented: That their Power comes from God, the Fountain of all Power; and that they are ſuppoſed to be entruſted with it for his Honour, and the Good of his People: That by their faithfully Executing the Laws againſt Offenders, particularly thoſe that are made for the Honour of God, the Suppreſſing of Prophaneneſs and Immorality; they are to be a *Terrour to Evil doers*; and in order to this, that they would therefore remember, That as the pooreſt Wretch hath a Talent that he muſt render an Account of, they muſt expect one day to appear at a Tribunal themſelves, and give an Account of the diſcharge of their Oaths and Truſts, of the Employment of their Authority, and their other Advantages, and for the Deluge of Evils that either hath or may fall upon the Nation through their wilful Neglect of their Duty; for our Bleſſed Saviour hath told us, That *unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required.* And the Authour of the Book of *Wiſdom* thus expreſſes himſelf to this purpoſe; *Hear therefore, O ye Kings, and underſtand;* *Luke* 12. 48. *Wiſdom* 6. 1.

learn ye that be Judges of the Ends of the Earth. Give ear, you that rule the People, and glory in the Multitude of Nations; for Power is given you of the Lord, and Sovereignty from the Highest, who shall try your Works, and search out your Counsels, because, being Ministers of his Kingdom, you have not judged aright, nor kept the Law, nor walked after the Counsel of God. Horribly and speedily shall he come upon you: for a sharp Judgment shall be to them that be in high Places. For Mercy will soon pardon the Meanest, but mighty Men shall be mightily tormented.

To the GENTRY and COMMONALTY *of the Nation*, that they consider, That tho' they have not the particular Oaths and Vows, the Trusts and Authority of any of the Orders I have mentioned, they have notwithstanding their Baptismal Engagements upon 'em, which they own when they come to the Holy Communion; and that if they would acquit themselves as Christians, they must endeavour to be such in all their Relations; they must behave themselves as good Magistrates and Subjects, as good Citizens, and Members of their Community, as well as good Masters and Servants, good Parents and Children; but that they cannot be reasonably thought to be so without having a Love to God, a Zeal for his Honour, or a Concern for the Welfare of their Neighbours, and of the Community of which they are a part; and that it may be doubted whether they can have either if they can contentedly hear, without any Concern, Men openly affront their God, bid Defiance to his Laws, go on with a full Career to Destruction, and bring Decay and Ruine upon their Country, which, 'tis evident, they may use proper and effectual means to prevent, as particularly by their giving of Informations of enormous Offences to the Magistrate, (which I have in another place more largely insisted on) and which they have at this time so fair an Oppor-

Opportunity to employ as is offer'd them by the Declarations of the Government, and the Aſſiſtance of ſuch Bodies of Chriſtians that are not only in and about this City, but that are ſpreading through the Cities and Corporations of the Kingdom. And do you think it diſhonourable for you to conceal any Offences that endanger the Government, or any Injuries that are done your Neighbour, when you can do him right by the bare diſcovering of it to the Magiſtrate? Is it reckoned an act of Bravery to adventure your Lives in the taking of a Thief, or a Murtherer? An Act of Charity to prevent any Injury to your Neighbour in his civil Concerns, to hinder a Fool or a Lunatick from wounding of his Body, or deſtroying his Life? And is not a ſincere endeavour to prevent the publick Diſhonour of the Name, the Day, and the Laws of God, by acquainting the Magiſtrate with theſe high Offences, in order to the Suppreſſing of them, as is done with general Approbation and Applauſe in other ordinary Caſes, when Mens private Rights, the Security of the Government, or the Welfare of the Nation is concerned, a Work becoming Chriſtians? Does it become a Soldier of Chriſt Jeſus to ſee Him publickly affronted; to hear his Wounds mentioned oftner in horrid Oaths and Execrations, than in ſerious Diſcourſes; his Laws trampled on; and their Fellow-Chriſtians to live in the open Commiſſion of ſuch Sins as manifeſtly tend to bring great Calamities upon them in this World, to deſtroy their Souls, and draw down National Judgments, without taking any Notice of it, and only for fear of meeting with ſome reproachful Words or rude Treatment (which yet the Magiſtrate, if he hath a juſt ſenſe of his Duty, will not ſuffer, but ſeverely puniſh) from a hardned Offender, or the Advocates of Vice; from ſuch whoſe Commendations a virtuous Man would be inclined to look on as a real Diſparagement, and their Company a Scandal, and when at the ſame time they have, for their Comfort and Support,

ſome of the great Rewards of Virtue in this World, the Approbation of their own Conſciences, and of good Men, with the hopes of an Everlaſting Reward on the other ſide of the Grave? Does this Behaviour adorn the Goſpel? Would the Chriſtians of old have thought well of it? Or is it ſufficient for us to call our ſelves the Diſciples of the Bleſſed Jeſus, *who went about doing good*, without endeavouring, in any degree, to follow his glorious Example?

Herein then our Gentry and Commonalty ſeem to have a great Opportunity of furthering the Work of Reformation: But this is not all the Advantage they have, If the Laws that relate to Religion are upon ſo many and ſuch momentous Conſiderations thus Zealouſly to be put in Execution, it is evident, that thoſe Perſons that are not only unconcerned for the Execution of thoſe Laws, but that violate and contemn them, cannot, with any colour of Reaſon, be eſteemed Friends to their Country, but rather as unworthy to live in it, and enjoy the common Benefits of it; and if ſo, they are unqueſtionably much more unfit for, and unworthy of Poſts of Honour and Truſt; and thoſe that concern themſelves for the Election or Promotion of ſuch Perſons to ſuch Places, when Men of Virtue may be eaſily found to accept of them, and perhaps offer them to their Choice, upon the account of their Titles or Eſtates, of their Relation or Friendſhip to them, and I think I may further add, for their being of their Faction or Party, muſt, I think, be judged to behave themſelves ſo very unbecoming good Common-Wealths-Men and good Chriſtians, that they act therein as very miſchievous Members of the Community, and even Enemies to their Religion and Country; on the contrary, they who are truly Religious, who not only keep the Laws themſelves, but are diligent to execute the Laws, or zealouſly encourage others in the furthering the Execution of them, muſt be looked on,

on, by thoſe that make any pretence to Virtue, as great Friends to the Community, of which they are Members, as proper Perſons to be honourably diſtinguiſhed, which it behoves all Men to conſider, who are any ways concerned in this Matter, and would ſhew their ſincere Regard for the Intereſt of Religion, or their Country, * particularly the Gentry and Commonalty of *England*, to whom I am addreſſing my ſelf, in the Election of their Repreſentatives in Parliament, of Magiſtrates in Corporations, and Subordinate Officers in them, and all other Places throughout the Kingdom, on whoſe Behaviour the Welfare of the Nation does ſo much depend, leſt when they might have ſerved the true Intereſts of Religion and the Nation, by their making Choice of ſuch worthy Perſons as might have proved great Bleſſings to us, if they had been thus employed, by their Faithfulneſs in their Truſts, and by the happy Influence of their good Example; they, on the other hand, by being inſtrumental in the Promotion of vicious Men, eſpecially after the evil of their doing ſo is repreſented to them, may perhaps draw a Guilt upon themſelves of Partaking in other Mens Sins, of being Acceſſory, in ſome degree, to the Miſchief that is done by the Negligence and Unfaithfulneſs of ſuch Perſons in their Duty whom they make Choice of, as well as by the malignant Influence of their Examples upon others. Hath God Almighty ſaid, *Him that honoureth me I will honour*. Hath Holy *David* ſaid, *Mine Eyes ſhall be upon the Faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he ſhall ſerve me*. Hath the King lately declared in his *Proclamation*, *That vicious Men are a Diſcredit to his Kingdom, and that he will diſcountenance and puniſh Immorality and Prophaneneſs in Perſons of the higheſt and loweſt degree, particularly in ſuch as are employed near his Royal Perſon; and that he will, upon all Occaſions, diſtinguiſh Men of Piety and Virtue by Marks of his*

* Omnes quidem Magiſtratus, in bene conſtituenda republica convenit eſſe virtute præditos, ſed maximè eos qui ſenatoriæ dignitatis gradum obtinent, nec eſt laudanda reſpublica in qua peræque bonis & malis, prudentibus & ſtultis honores tribuantur, quare legibus hos oportet eſſe deſcriptos ut quorum virtus induſtriaq; ſit bonorum approbatione commendata his honos debeatur. Unde in antiquorum rebuſpub. ſtatuæ, arcus triumphales, ſepulchra publica, laudationes, & alia id generis meritis tribuantur.

his Royal Favour? And, laſtly, hath the Commons of *England*, aſſembled in a late Parliament, in their *Humble Addreſs* to His Majeſty, repreſented to Him, *That the Debauchery of the Nation is chiefly owing to the Negligence and ill Example of Magiſtrates?* And can any that have any Principles of Virtue, and Love to their Country, that ſhall duly and impartially conſider this, be inſtrumental in promoting to Places of Honour and Authority, and chuſe to entruſt the Concerns of Religion and our greateſt Temporal Intereſts in the hands of prophane or vicious Men? How far Ignorance, Prejudice, or Inconſideration, may have hitherto been an Excuſe for any concerned herein, I ſhall not preſume to determine, but I may be allowed to ſay, that 'tis to be hoped it will not be hereafter pretended by any Men who are ſincerely concerned for the Honour and Intereſt of Religion, and the Security and Proſperity of their Country, who having this Matter laid before them, ſhall not only conſider the fatal Conſequences of their own ill Conduct in this Matter, but the many and almoſt unſpeakable Evils that this Nation hath ſo long groaned under by the Election and Promotion of wicked Men to Places of Honour or Power; and, on the contrary, what a Glorious face of things we might expect to ſee if Men of all Ranks, as well as thoſe to whom I am addreſſing my ſelf, would acquit themſelves herein, as Natural Reaſon as well as Religion may convince them they ought, in the Diſcouraging or Oppoſing, in their ſeveral Stations, the Election and Promotion of wicked Men to publick Poſts, and thereby keeping them from doing ſo much Miſchief as they have undeniably the greateſt Advantage for their doing in them. And if we will not be moved herein by either Religious or Civil Conſiderations, I muſt ask leave to ſay, that we are ſunk below Heatheniſm in this reſpect, the formerly famous

* *Roman*

* *Roman* and *Græcian* Common-Wealths having had the greateſt regard to Virtue in the Choice of their Senators and Magiſtrates, which ſeems to have been one of the greateſt cauſes of their Stability and Proſperity. And herein the Gentry and Commonalty of *England* have likewiſe manifeſtly greater Advantages and Opportunities for the Promoting of the Work of Reformation, for the making one brave Effort for the Intereſt of Religion and Virtue, for the Honour and Welfare of *England*, and thereby to recover the former Glory of their Anceſtors, who were Famous for their Virtue, || and Love to their Country, and which appeared ſo glorious in the Heroes of the Gentile World. And for the Encouragement of thoſe that are deſtitute of the Advantages of Riches and Honours, of Authority and Learning, to uſe their Diligence and Zeal in the Inſtances I have given, or in any other Expreſſions of their Duty for the Promoting of this

* Apud Lacedæmonios ſenatui & reliquis virtus potius & merita ſuffragabantur. Nam virtutis præcipuè habita fuit ratio, ut in aliis omnibus apud eos; ita etiam in quibuſvis Magiſtratibus conferendis, *Nic. Crag. Ripen. de Rep. Lacedæm.*

Et *Plato* de hac repub. ita dixit: Δικαίων μὲν, ὦ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, τοῦτο γε τῇ πόλει ὑμῶν

ξυνδιδόναι, ὅτι πενίᾳ ἢ πλούτῳ, ἢ βασιλείᾳ ἢ ἰδιωτείᾳ διαφέρουσιν, δεῖ ἥκιστα τιμᾶν ἢ τοὐναντίον τιμᾶσθαι. Cujus ſententiæ fuit & Zenophon libro de repub. Lacedæmon. *Plato* divinitus hoc allatum conſilium affirmare non dubitat. Non enim, inquit, decet in civitate honores ideò in pretio eſſe, quod is qui eos gerat, divitiis excellat; nec quidem is qui illos adminiſtrat, aut celer ſit, aut formoſus, aut robuſtus, niſi aliqua præter hæc adſit virtus, & ea quidem virtus à qua temperantia minimè abſit, quod politicum præceptum in quavis republica ſervari ex uſu eſſet. Et *Demoſthenes* Græcus ſcribit, tantum τὰς καλὰς ἀρχὰς, in ordinem Senatorum cooptari. Ætas deinde juſta lege quaſi annuaria definita in Senatoribus, fuit annorum ſexaginta. Non enim recipiatur, qui non hunc annum attigerat, vel eo major eſſet. Cæteris vita honeſtè acta in Senatoribus præcipuè deſiderabatur.

Sic Populus Romanus deligit Magiſtratus quaſi Reipublicæ villicos, in quibus ſiqua præterea eſt ars facile patitur, ſin minus virtute eorum & innocentia contentus eſt, *Tullii Oratio cum Plancio.* Satis eſſe virtutem & innocentiam in Magiſtratu.

Novemviri apud Athenienſes antequam aſſumerentur ad Magiſtratum illum, de omni vita acta cauſam dicere ſolebant, quod ſi nullam dedecoris labem perpetua innocentia contraxiſſe videbantur, ad τὰς ἀρχὰς adſumebantur, deinde Magiſtratus geſti cauſam dicentes, rationeſque ferentes, ſi tum quoque innocentes uſquequaque apparuiſſent, ad Areopageticum Senatum conſcribantur, Solonis lege, *Sam. Petitus de Legibus Atticis fol.* 190. Introducebantur autem omnes illi Magiſtratus quorum anteactam vitam expendi, & eam inquiri oportet, *Petitus fol.* 223.

|| Eadem forma in elegendis Duumviris, quæ in creandis Decurionibus obſervabatur, hoc excepto, quod Duumviri tribus antè aut pluribus menſibus quam Magiſtratum inirent nominabantur: ut ſi interea juſtam honoris cauſam habuiſſent, alii eorum loco congruo tempore ſubſtitui poſſent, *Pancirolli Notitia Dignitatum utriuſque Imperii.*

recuſandi

Work, †I will put them in mind, that it hath been long obſerved, that the Perſons who have thought to have performed the braveſt Actions, and done the greateſt Service to the World, have generally been Men of obſcure Birth and Parentage, who were without Riches and Honours, and often without Learning; of which a multitude of Inſtances might be given, if 'twas neceſſary here to inſert them. That tho' 'tis freely allowed, that Authority and Quality, when they are accompanied with Virtue, as they ought to be, or when they are the Rewards of it, *which too ſeldom happens, are truly honourable, and enable thoſe that have them to be more ſerviceable to the Intereſt of Religion, and the Good of Mankind, which is its proper Buſineſs; but when they are ſeparated from Virtue, they render thoſe that poſſeſs them truly ſcandalous, and highly pernicious. 'Tis true likewiſe, That when Learning is purſued for the Service of Religion, and Good of the World, it is both innocent and laudable, and the Advantages of it for that end are confeſt; yet 'tis plain, from too ſad Experience, that 'tis too generally ſought upon baſe Conſiderations, and frequently applied to very ill Purpoſes; as is allow'd, when 'tis made uſe of for the Raiſing of Hereſies, the Adulterating or Confounding the Simplicity of the Chriſtian Doctrine with Philoſophical Diſtinctions, or to the raiſing and continuing of unneceſſary Diſputes out of Pride and Vanity, of Paſſion or Worldly Intereſt, to the Ruine of Charity, and manifeſt Injury of Religion. But as Virtue may be obtained without great Knowledge, and is truly

† Si quis rem conſiderare velit, omnes eos vel ſaltem maximam partem eorum, qui in hoc toto terrarum orbe res præſtantiores aggreſſi ſunt, atque inter cæteros ævi ſui heroes excelluerunt, aut obſcuro, aut abjecto loco editos, & prognatos fuiſſe abjectis parentibus.

Non eſt prætereundum maximorum virorum pleroſque patres ignoratos, matres impudicas fuiſſe, *Scaliger.*

* Alii pro pecunia emunt Nobilitatem, alii illam lenocinio, alii veneficiis, alii parricidiis; multis perditio nobilitatem conciliat; pleriq; adulatione, detractione. *Æneas Sylvius.* Hunc uſuræ ditarunt, illum ſpolia, proditiones; hic veneficiis ditatus, ille adulationibus; huic adulteria lucrum præbent, nonnullis mendacia; quidam ex conjuge quæſtum faciunt, pleriq; ex natis.

Aude aliquid brevibus gyaris, aut carcere dignum Si vis eſſe aliquid.
Indigniſſimus digniſſimo præfertur, plerunq; illaudatus laudatiſſimo.
Aſelli ornantur phaleris, dephalerantur equi.

*ho-

* honourable without any Ornaments from Birth and Honour, Authority or Learning; ſo it makes Men capable of doing much good: Let them conſider not only this; but further, That it pleaſes Almighty God ſometimes to raiſe the Spirits of Men above their natural pitch for great Performances, to make uſe of mean and contemptible Inſtruments, in Humane Appearance, to bring about the great Ends of his Providence, whereby his Wiſdom and Power is more viſible, and the Pride of Man is more humbled; and that among the various Inſtances of this kind, which Sacred and Prophane Hiſtory acquaint us with, he did ſo in the Publiſhing of Chriſtianity, when he *choſe the fooliſh things of the World to confound the Wiſe, and the weak things of the World to confound the things which are Mighty*; when he Commiſſioned a few mean and illiterate Perſons to Preach the Goſpel, which notwithſtanding prevailed over the Policy and Learning, the Worldly Intereſt and Prejudice, the Strength and Oppoſition of the World; and that as then *not many Wiſe Men after the Fleſh, not many Mighty, not many Noble were called*; ſo in the Ages ſince, tho' there hath been of all Conditions, as well Noble, as Ignoble; Learned, as Illiterate; Kings, and Philoſophers; Emperors, and States-Men, who have been truly devoted to Religion, and have ſhewed the mighty Power and Energy of it, and adorned the Ages in which they have lived; *yet it hath been a general Obſervation among Heathens as well as Chriſtians, and 'tis a terrible one for great Men to reflect upon, That Riches and Honours do in the Nature of them tend to corrupt Mens Minds, are great Clogs to Wiſdom, mighty Obſtructions in the Buſineſs of the Chriſtian Warfare to thoſe that poſſeſs them: And therefore, That the Great and the Noble are too generally diverted and carried away from *the One thing neceſſary*, the working out of their own Salvation, and conſequently their being concerned for that of others,

* Virtute tua major, quam ant Hetruſci imperii fortuna, aut numeroſa & decora prolis fœlicitate beatior evadis. Nobilitas ſola eſt ac unica virtus.

1 *Cor.* 1. 27.

* Luxuriant animi rebus plerunque ſecundis.
Turpi fregerunt ſecula luxu Divitiæ molles.
Pecuniis augetur improbitas.
Non invenitur ſapientia in terra ſuavitèr viventium.
Divitiæ ſeculi ſunt laquei diaboli.
Divitiæ rarò virtutis ſunt comites.
Pietas, probitas, fides, privata bona ſunt.
Fortuna quem nimium fovet, ſtultum facit.

by the violent Temptations that their Condition expoſes and ſubjects them to, which Perſons of a lower Rank are much without; wherefore our Saviour hath aſſur'd us how *hard it is for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; out of a ſenſe whereof a great Number of Chriſtians in moſt, if not all Ages, have refuſed Titles and Honours, and have renounced Riches and Worldly Grandeur: Nay, Emperors and Princes, Kings and Queens, have forſaken their Crowns, their Fortunes and Territories, for a ſafe and happy Retirement: And it accordingly appears, by the Account that is given of the Endeavours that have been ſo ſucceſsful towards a National Reformation, That as they were not begun, ſo they have not been aſſiſted by many of the Rich and Mighty, but by Perſons of a lower Rank, who ſubmitted to be reckoned Diſturbers of the publick Peace, Imprudent and Hypocritical Perſons, *&c.* as the Chriſtians of old were by the Heathens, and as ſuch will hardly fail to be who in a corrupt Age ſhall faithfully go about to convince ſome Men of their Lukewarmneſs and Neglect of their Duty, and to diſturb the Generality in their Vices; who were willing, I ſay, to bear the Cenſures, the cruel Mockings, and the Frowns of the World, and perhaps ſome of them to hazard their Lives for the Vindicating of the Honour of the Laws of God, the Good of Souls, and the Service of their Country; and that tho' it may perhaps be expected from the Character of ſome few of the Great and Noble among us, who ſeem to be much more honourably diſtinguiſh'd from thoſe of their own high Rank, by their Virtue, than they are from thoſe below them, by their Quality, that they have it in their Inclinations, as it ſeems to be in their Power, with God's Bleſſing, to be Inſtruments of Reforming us from publick Prophaneneſs and Immoralities; yet, that 'tis ſtill to be feared, that great Men will not generally at leaſt obtain of themſelves to declare for oppreſſed Virtue,

Mat. 19. 23, 24.

and

and engage in its Cauſe till it hath regained its Reputation more generally in the World, and it is accounted a Mark of greater Infamy to be vicious.

Prophaneneſs and Debauchery have, in truth, been ever Infamous in the Opinions of the wiſe and good Men in all Ages of the World, and treated as ſuch by the Religion and Laws of Heathen Nations, as well as by the Chriſtian Religion, and the Laws of our own Country; which Juſtice and Temperance, Chaſtity and Truth, never were, that I know of, by any; nay, there have never, I conceive, been many Men ſo loſt to the Notions of Good and Evil, as ſeriouſly to ſet a Mark of Infamy upon ſome Men for their Virtue, or to make Panegyricks upon others for their Vices; and neither the Number or the Quality of thoſe that are guilty of Prophaneneſs and Debauchery can any more alter the Nature of them, or can take off them that Infamy that the Law of God, the Laws of Nations and the Law of Nature have fixt on them, than they can the Nature of Murther, Bribery, or Theft; and as they are infamous in their Nature, they will every day more appear to be ſo, if we continue to make our vigorous Efforts againſt them. It will not ere long be thought creditable for Men of an inferior Rank to be carried through the Streets before the Magiſtrate, or to be put in the Stocks, to do there publick Penance for the Violation of Divine and Humane Laws: Or will it be Honourable for Men of Title or Authority, who have thought themſelves unfit for gentile Converſation without a large ſhare of Lewdneſs, have reckoned it Wit to Blaſpheme, and have, 'tis believed, made their way to their Preferments by their Prophaneneſs and Debauchery, to have the Penalties of thoſe Laws levied upon them in the Sight of their Neighbours or their Country; to be upon Record; and to be diſabled, for thoſe Offences, for Places of Honour, of Publick and Private Truſts; to be told

told before the Congregation *Four* times a Year by the King, in his *Proclamation*, that he reckons them to be a *Diſcredit to his Kingdom*, and ſtrictly Commands their being brought to *Shame* and *Puniſhment*; and by their Miniſter at the ſame time, that they ought to be avoided by Men of Religion, to be excluded from Chriſtian Communion till they reform, and that they will, unleſs they do ſo, be ſhut out of Heaven, and be condemned to unſpeakable and everlaſting Confuſion and Torment? In ſhort, we may in a little time ſee a Drunkard, a Lewd or a Prophane Perſon, tho' a Man of the greateſt Quality or Eſtate, who now paſſes with too little Remark and Contempt, and is kept in countenance by the Multitude of Offenders of the ſame kind, make but a very ſcurvy figure, be aſhamed to ſhew himſelf in any Company, but of ſuch as are like himſelf, abandoned of all ſenſe of true Honour as well as Religion, and ſhunned by all but the unclean Herd of the Vicious and Prophane, who may ere long be aſhamed of one another in the ſight of the Sun, and may be forced to converſe, or rather to have their gangs as High-way-Men, Clippers and Coiners have, in dark Corners, and in fear of being diſcovered. This is part of the Glorious Proſpect that we have in view, whilſt we continue to make our vigorous Efforts againſt Vice and Prophaneneſs: And is there any doubt whether they that acquit themſelves in this Noble Enterprize as they ought will entitle themſelves to great Acknowledgements from the preſent Age, and from Poſterity, ſince the Influence of their good Example, and the happy Effects of their pious Endeavours, may laſt to ſucceeding Ages, as long as the Nation, and perhaps the World may laſt?

Let then the Men of the World, whoſe Hopes terminate with this Life, purſue Honours and Titles, and what in their fooliſh Language they call their Worldly Advantages; let them that think of no other Happineſs, court popular

Air,

Air, intrigue and fawn, drudge and ſcramble for little parcels of Earth, which if they meet with are their Portion, attended with Fear and Envy, Jealouſie and Hatred, Anxiety and Grief, * which are their ſecret and almoſt conſtant Tormentors, and make them as the Scripture expreſſes it, as *the troubled Sea that cannot reſt:* But let thoſe that can look on theſe deluded and miſerable Souls with a juſt Pity; that know the Pleaſures of Innocence; that are acquainted with the Triumphs of Conſcience that ariſe from the ſenſe of their having ſerved their God, their Country, and themſelves; that hope, after a few Years, for an Everlaſting Inheritance, and unſpeakable Joy at God's Right-hand; that believe that our Bleſſed Saviour † *Chriſt Jeſus was manifeſted that he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil*, think it more honourable to be employed in the Promoting the ſame Glorious Deſign to the utmoſt of their Power, and by all Chriſtian Methods, according to their Abilities and Opportunities, than to be Favourites of the greateſt Prince, than to be Maſters of the World. We ſhall indeed meet with many Diſcouragements, and much Reſiſtance in theſe Endeavours. The Reformation of a Nation, particularly that is ſo very degenerate, that a great part of it ſeems to act as if it had entred into a Combination againſt Religion, cannot be thought to be an eaſie Work; we never, I ſuppoſe, heard of ſuch a one in any Age that was effected without Oppoſition. The firſt Attempts, eſpecially of a National Reformation, unleſs they have the Advantages of Power, of Intereſt, or of Numbers of Men to ſupport them, muſt be attended with great Difficulties; thoſe that are engaged in them may expect to wreſtle not only againſt the Paſſions and Luſts of private Men, but againſt *Principalities* and *Powers*, againſt the Strength and Policy of the Prince, as well as Men of this World, ſince thoſe that moſt need Reformation will

* O ſi pectora pateant divitum, quantos intus ſublimis agit fortuna metus? Brutio coro pulſante fretum mitior unda eſt.

Quem mihi regem dabis non curis plenum; non diadema aſpicias, ſed vitam afflictione refertam, non catervas ſatellitum, ſed curarum multitudinem.

Nil aliud poteſtas culminis quam tempeſtas mentis.

Non enim gazæ neque conſularis ſummovet lictor miſeros tumultus mentis, & curas laqueata circum tecta volantes.

† 1 *John* 3. 8.

will moſt explode the Attempts of it, and oppoſe it; and among them there will be often ſuch met with as by their Quality or Intereſt, their Power or their Authority, will be moſt capable to obſtruct it; and there will be others, who, when they have not Power, or they dare not openly oppoſe the Undertaking, will be ſpreading their Jealouſies, that ſome ſecular Intereſt or dangerous Deſign is carrying on under ſuch plauſible Pretences, and will uſe their utmoſt diligence to find Fault with the manner (how regular ſoever it be) of its being carried on, or to raiſe Objections againſt the Perſons engaged in it; and when they cannot find any real ones, they will have recourſe to their Inventions, to down-right Slanders, to miſ-repreſent them, as the Heathen Perſecutors did the Martyrs, to expoſe them the more to the Peoples Hatred and Rage; nay, and that which makes the Work yet the more difficult is, that there will not be wanting another kind of Men, and indeed, I conceive, ſome of the worſt ſort of Enemies to ſuch a Deſign, who through ſome unhappy Principles or Prejudices are not only content to ſit ſtill themſelves, and to be unconcerned in this Matter, but perhaps to excuſe themſelves from giving that Aſſiſtance which might otherwiſe be with Modeſty expected from them; and to prevent the Cenſure that may be apt to fall upon them for their ill Conduct, are very ready to declare the Attempts of this kind impracticable, unſeaſonable, or imprudent, as they do moſt other things of the ſame nature; which, 'tis much to be both feared and lamented, many of them want either Zeal, or perhaps Honeſty to undertake, which Men of no leſs true Wiſdom, if that Principle, whether it be called Caution or Policy, that keeps Men from doing their Duty, do deſerve the Name of Folly, rather than Wiſdom, not only attempt, but ſurmount the appearing Difficulties of. But tho' Reſiſtance to the firſt Attempts of Reformation from the Powers of Darkneſs and

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the corrupt Nature of Man was plainly foreſeen, and may have been experienced by thoſe concerned in the Tranſactions I have given an account of, and may be ſtill expected in ſome meaſure in the Proſecution of it; yet as 'twas at firſt neceſſary to undertake it, ſo 'tis ſtill as neceſſary to purſue it. Nay, the higher the Tide of Debauchery and Prophaneneſs runs, the more evident Reaſon there is for us to look to our Banks, to uſe all proper Methods for the Oppoſing of it, and the more generous and brave is the Oppoſition, unleſs 'tis more reaſonable to give way to it, and expect an Inundation of Wickedneſs and Ruine, than to endeavour to prevent it, ſince as the Caſe will grow the worſe, and more deſperate by the delay, ſo the Objections that are now made againſt it will thereby grow the ſtronger.

Let then the Oppoſition to this Enterprize be as great and deſperate, and from as various Cauſes as we can well ſuppoſe it; if thoſe who are engaged in it do ſincerely propoſe God's Glory and the Good of Mankind in their Endeavours; if they often turn their Thoughts within themſelves, as well as upon the Faults of others, and endeavour *to be blameleſs and harmleſs, and without Rebuke in the midſt of a perverſe Generation*; if they continue to take great Care that their Conduct in this Affair be regular, governed by the Laws of the Land, and the Precepts of their Religion, remembring that the Goodneſs of no end can make Evil means lawful, and as free as far as 'tis poſſible from Imprudencies and Inadvertencies, to which the wiſeſt and beſt Men are ſubject, and therefore are no reaſonable Objection againſt a good Deſign to honeſt Men, that know how to give all juſt Allowances to Humane Frailties in a Work of Difficulty, wherein many unexpected Occurrences will ariſe, Numbers of Men are engaged, and who will be ſometimes taken unprepar'd and at diſadvantage by bad and deſigning Men, who will not fail

Philip. 2. 15.

to wait for their Halting, and to improve all kind of Advantages againſt them; if they go on with Diligence and Reſolution, conſidering that *Solomon's* Direction, *Whatever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with all thy Might*, in this Work ſeems more eſpecially to be regarded by thoſe who are employed in it, a Woe being pronounced againſt them that *do the Work of the Lord negligently*, and a Crown being promiſed to them *that are faithful to Death*; if, laſtly, they cry mightily to God, to whoſe Omnipotence no Difficulties are inſuperable, and without whom nothing is ſtrong, no means can attend their end, for his gracious Direction and merciful Aſſiſtance in a Work of Hazard and Difficulty, wherein Wiſdom and Conſtancy, the whole Armour of the Goſpel ſeems requiſite, the Honour and Intereſt of Religion, and the Good of Souls ſeem to be ſo much concern'd, to prevent their being aſſaulted with ſuch violent Temptations that might overcome them, or to give them ſuch extraordinary Supports and Comforts as may enable them to bear up under them; and they humbly depend more upon his Direction and Bleſſing than their own Diligence and Conduct, conſidering that after *all we can do* Luke 17. 10. *we are but unprofitable Servants*; that the Zeal we have for God's Honour, and the Succeſs of it is from Him; and that our beſt Endeavours herein, as well as our other Performances, will have a great mixture of Humane Frailty. If they thus go on with Sincerity, with Prudence, with Courage, with Humility, and truſt in God, they may, I think, face all the World, we may ſoon ſee what Courage Vice hath, whether Prophaneneſs and Debauchery will be able to hold up their heads with their Supporters, (which they have too long had within our Memory) as Religion hath often done without them, and when the Powers of the World have been againſt it. No, Sin is of the Nature of the Devil, its Author, cowardly and ſneaking, and will, with God's Bleſſing, give way when thus

thus oppoſed, which thoſe concerned in the Tranſactions I have given an Account of have abundantly experimented, and who have had ſo great Succeſs, as makes it very evident that a general Concurrence of good Men may, with God's Bleſſing, effect a general Reformation; but if the Concurrence of Men of Religion ſhould not prove ſo univerſal as is hoped it will, or if our Endeavours ſhould not ſucceed to a National Reformation, as is propoſed, we may however hope to do a great deal of good; we ſhall bear our Teſtimony to Religion againſt the Corruptions of the Age, and we cannot, I think, fail of giving a great Check to publick Wickedneſs; and tho' we ſhould not after all, by our Prayers and Endeavours, prevent the Deluge of Calamities that threaten us, an Ark may mercifully be provided for us, we may deliver our own Souls, and it will then be known who they are that are to be thanked that a thorough Reformation was not effected, and the Miſery of the Nation prevented; not only thoſe who by deſperately diſcouraging and oppoſing pious and proper Endeavours for Promoting a Reformation, ſeem to be of the Number of thoſe that may be ſaid, in ſome ſenſe, *to fight againſt God*; but thoſe likewiſe that deſpiſed the Warnings we gave them of their Danger, all the Perſuaſions with which we preſſed them to ſet about it, and would not be prevailed with to give any hearty Aſſiſtance to the Work. Suppoſing then that we are to prepare, in the Proſecution of this Enterprize, for evil Surmiſings and reproachful Words; for Storms of Malice and ill Will, which the Enemy of all Goodneſs and the Paſſions of Men may be expected to raiſe, this, I conceive, may, now the Tide is turning, be generally the greateſt Oppoſition of the moſt infatuated and ſenſeleſs Slaves of Vice; for in Reverence to our common Nature I muſt preſume, that there are few that will be declared Agents for the Devil, that are ſo abandoned of all ſenſe of Honour, all Concern for their Reputation, as to enter publickly the Liſts, and venture

their Lives for his Service. And as wicked Men have the worſt Cauſe, they have, I think, no ſettled and ſteady Principles to act upon, but little true Courage, and no Faith among them; they will often betray one another when Occaſion offers, and therefore we may conclude that they will never make a firm ſtand againſt the united Body of good Men if they acquit themſelves as they ought in ſo glorious an Undertaking.

To the Men of Religion and Virtue of all Ranks, Orders, and Denominations, without diſtinction, I ask leave therefore, in this common Cauſe of Religion, humbly to apply my ſelf. Your Religion is avowedly attacqued by the deſperate Rebels of Chriſtianity, and Enemies to Virtue; your God is publickly diſhonoured, yea, ſometimes, 'tis ſtill to be feared, Blaſphemed, for the Entertainment of Perſons of all Degrees, all Ages, and both Sexes; His Laws are trampled on; His Servants deſpis'd; the Notions of Good and Evil are endeavoured to be confounded, and your Country is in imminent danger of being loſt, if in the preſent Conteſt between Religion and Debauchery Religion does not prevail. You are all confeſſedly, by your Baptiſmal Engagement, liſted Soldiers for God's Service, againſt the Devil's Kingdom. And as God hath an undoubted Title to your Service, the King by publickly declaring for a vigorous Execution of the Laws againſt publick Wickedneſs, and the Cauſe of Religion, hath given you an happy Opportunity of diſcharging your Fidelity and Zeal for your Great Lord and Maſter; and your Fellow-Chriſtians, who are already ſucceſsfully engaged in a brave Oppoſition to Vice and Prophaneneſs, to theſe Rebels to Religion, and Enemies to your Country, ſeem to call on you to enter into their pious Confederacy, as *Moſes* heretofore did on the *Iſraelites*, when he ſtood in the Gate of the Camp; *Who is on the Lord's ſide, let him come unto me?* Or as Holy *David* of old, *Who will riſe up with*

Exod. 32. 26.

with me againſt the Evil doers? Who will ſtand up with me againſt the Workers of Iniquity? Now then is the Time, if you are yet willing to make one general and brave Effort for the Intereſt of Religion, for the Honour and Welfare of the *Engliſh* Nation. And will you any longer defer your Declaring and Engaging in this Glorious Work, now it ſeems ſo apparent that this Cloud that appeared ſo little to you at firſt is like to overſpread our whole Horizon; that one of the moſt plauſible and uncomfortable Objections which was made to this Undertaking, of its being impracticable, which we have too much reaſon to ſuſpect to be upon other like Occaſions a frequent Excuſe for Fear, of Lazineſs, or want of good Principles, is taken off, by the great Succeſs that hath attended it; that the Heat of the Day, the fierceſt Oppoſition to theſe Attempts, ſeems much over; and that you have ſo very great reaſon to conclude that the Virtuous part of the Nation, of all Parties, will fall in and give their Aſſiſtance in it, when more particular *Methods* ſhall be laid before them; that if we point our united Batteries againſt the ſtrong holds of Debauchery and Prophaneneſs; if we proſecute this Religious War with Conduct and Reſolution, which is ſo ſucceſsfully begun with ſo unequal a humane force, we have Victory in view, we may, with God's Bleſſing, ſee a Reformation throughly effected, and put upon ſuch a firm Foundation, as that it may not be eaſily in the Power of a vicious Court, or of a degenerate Nobility or Gentry, in a ſucceeding Reign to overturn it, again to debauch the Nation, and bring it in ſuch danger of Ruine. But is it not enough that you that have had an early Knowledge of theſe Tranſactions, have not ſooner engaged in a Cauſe which you could not well be ſuppoſed, without great Inconſideration or Prejudice, but ſecretly to approve of under all its Diſadvantages, when it was in its ſelf the ſame as it is now with its Succeſs, and meerly perhaps becauſe you

thought

thought the Service might be too hot for you, and therefore you left it to others to engage in an Oppoſition to Vice whilſt it was Triumphant, to fall upon it in its Intrenchments, to bear the brunt of the Battle, and reſerved your ſelves for leſs doubtful and dangerous Service, till the main Body of the Nation ſhould come up, and Victory ſhould be turning on the ſide of Virtue? Cowardice in this Caſe, as in War, may be almoſt as miſchievous and as criminal as Treachery. Where is then your Zeal for God, or Charity for Man, if you appear ſtill ſo unconcerned whether Religion or Prophaneneſs prevails, if after *Ten* Years are paſt of a Reign in which we had reaſon to promiſe our ſelves a Reformation would be carried on, and be the Glory of it, you ſtill frame further Excuſes to poſtpone it, and ſuch weak ones too as will very hardly paſs with a Mortal Man, who underſtands what indiſpenſible Obligations Religion lays upon us, heartily to ſet about it; but ſurely not with the living God, that *ſees not as Man ſees, but ſearches the Heart*? Do you think this Nation hath not bled and ſuffered long enough for our inexcuſable Delays, our deferring this neceſſary Work? How can you reconcile your Neutrality to the Promiſes which many of you may be ſuppoſed to have made in the late days of your Humiliation, or the Prayers that moſt of you put up to God for a National Reformation? How is it conſiſtent with the Pretenſions you make of your being of the pureſt Religion, or of the beſt conſtituted Church? What do you think of that Declaration of your Bleſſed Saviour, *He that is not with me is againſt me*? Can you perſwade your ſelves that your continuing your Neutrality till the Victory is either ſo gained on the ſide of Religion, that there will be little need of your Aſſiſtance; or that the Intereſts of Religion are depreſſed, and your Country ruined, (which there is ſuch Danger of) beyond the Example of former Ages, deſerves either the Name of Bravery, or *the Wiſdom that is from*

Mat. 12. 30.

from Above? Difficulties and Sufferings are surely the proper Exercise of Virtue, are as it were the Test and Touch-stone of a Noble Mind; and therefore the Persons who in all Ages have been esteemed the Wisest and Bravest, and to have deserved best of Mankind, have been those, who for the Vindication of Truth, the Cause of Religion, and the Service of their Country, have cheerfully undergone Ignominy, Banishment, and Death, through the Malignity of the Times, popular Fury, or the Tyranny of Governments; *insomuch, that the most celebrated Heathen Moralists and Philosophers declared, That *a Man could hardly be supposed to be Virtuous without Suffering for being so.* And one of them could bravely thus express himself to this purpose: If a Man can see a Sword at his Eyes without winking; if he can make it an indifferent Matter to him whether his Life goes out of his Throat, or at his Mouth; if he can hear himself sentenced to Banishment, or Torments, and can say, *All this I am provided for*; this is, says he, the Temper of Mind that makes him great. Accordingly *Socrates* obtained so great Fame for his Suffering Death with Constancy for his Religion. *Aristides* his Justice, and *Rutilius* his Integrity and Courage, were more signalized by their Banishment. But not to send Christians to learn Constancy in Suffering for a good Cause to Heathens, among whom it was, in the first Ages of Christianity, a common Saying, †*That the Christians only were Despisers of Death.* So that *Origen* could boldly tell them, *We can as cheerfully lay down our Lives for our Religion, as the hardiest Philosopher of you can lay down his Coat.* Did the Martyrs and Confessours count it so great an Honour and Happiness to suffer Bonds and Imprisonment, Exile, and all kinds of Death, to be Rackt, Burnt, Stoned, Boiled, to be thrown to wild Beasts, and condemned to the Mines, for the Honour of their Lord and Master, and the Salvation of their own Souls; and laught at all the Methods of Cruelty,

* Magnum exemplum nisi mala fortuna non invenit, *Seneca.*

Non enim hilaritate, nec lascivia, nec risu, aut joco comite levitatis, sed sæpe etiam tristes, firmitate & constantiâ sunt beati, *Cic. de fin.*

Nondum felix es si te nondum turba deridet, *Sen.*

Ὁ δίκαιος μαστιγούμενος, στρεβλούμενος, δεδεσόμενος, ἐκκαυθήσεται, τὼ ὀφθαλμὼ, τελευτῶν πάντα κακὰ παθὼν ἀναχινδυλευθήσεται, *Plato de Repub.*

Mutium ignis, Fabritium paupertas, Regulum tormenta, Socratem venenum superare non potuit. Cicuta magnum Socratem fecit, *Sen. Ep.* 13.

† Soli Christiani mortis contemptores.

Cruelty, and tired out the Malice of their Perſecutours? and by theſe means, as the *Roman* Emperour, *Marcus Antoninus*, told the common Aſſembly at *Epheſus*, in his Letter to them, to ſtop the blind Rage of the *Pagan* Prieſts and People againſt them, *They were always Conquerours.* Could ſuch vaſt Numbers of Perſons, of both Sexes, of all Ages and ſuch various Conditions, more greedily court Martyrdom, than, as *Sulpitius Severus* obſerves, Men did in after-Ages ſeek Biſhopricks and Preferments in the Church, and valued it more than Crowns and Scepters? inſomuch, that a general Council thought fit to reſtrain their Expoſing themſelves unneceſſarily to it. And can the Diſciples of the ſame Crucify'd Saviour, who are obliged by him *to bear the Croſs, to rejoyce and be exceeding glad when they are Reviled and Perſecuted for his Sake*; and are directed by the Apoſtle *to count it all Joy when they fall into divers Temptations*, be affrighted at all Appearances of Sufferings in a good Cauſe, think the danger only of meeting with Shame, or other little Inconveniencies, a ſufficient Excuſe for their not appearing for the Honour of their Lord and Maſter, and the Saving of their Country? Nay, Can the Soldier endure all the Fatigues, and venture all the Hazards of War, make his way through Blood and Bullets, Fire and Water, upon no higher Motives generally, 'tis to be feared, than for a larger Pay, or a greater Poſt of Honour in an Army; to be talkt of by thoſe that have no more Reaſon than himſelf, or have little elſe to do? Can the Courtier, in a corrupt Reign, intrigue and plod, lye and fawn, loſe his Reſt, and waſt his Spirits, endure the Frowns of Men, and the Reproaches of his own Conſcience, to pleaſe an Earthly Prince, that is compoſed of the ſame Elements with himſelf? Can the Covetous Man drudge and ſweat, pinch Nature, and haraſs it, live Poorly and Contemptibly, for the miſerable Conſideration of filling his Cheſts full of poliſhed Earth, or leaving it for a Son who often

• Sanguis Martyrum ſemen Eccleſiæ.

Luke 14. 27.

John. 12.

Jam. 1. 2.

often takes almoſt as much Pains to damn his Soul in Spending it, as his Father might his, without Repentance, by his unjuſtifiable Methods of Getting it? Can the Sons of Wine and Luſt be content to brute their Minds, and ruine their Bodies, bear the Cries of ruined Tradeſmen, and of their miſerable Families, to tranſmit Poverty and Diſeaſe, Infamy and Miſery to their Poſterity; to watch and fear, to rot and roar for their unlawful and beaſtly Pleaſures? Can the Libertine, when his Conſcience will not ſuffer him to be eaſie in his Sins, when he wiſhes there was no Religion in this World, nor future Account in the next, be indefatigable in raking out of all the Heathen Authors, and our Modern Plays, all Expreſſions that may favour his Licentiouſneſs, and may help to beget or ſtrengthen his Infidelity; in ſhort, take more pains to ſilence and ſtupifie his Conſcience than might, with God's Bleſſing, be ſufficient, if it were well applied, to ſubdue his vicious Habits, to be wiſe, and to be happy? Can theſe Men be thus reſolute, diligent and daring in the purſuit of their Sins, or the empty things of this World, that neither Frowns nor Favours, Hazards nor Difficulties, do make any ſuch Impreſſion upon them, as either to deter or allure them from the Proſecution of their Deſigns, or from *treaſuring up to themſelves Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath*; and ſhall the Proſelytes of Religion, that know its ineſtimable Value, be ſo faint-hearted and ſneaking in its Glorious Cauſe, and in the diſcharge of their Duty, for the obtaining an Everlaſting Happineſs, that every little Difficulty, the Favour or the Frowns of its open Enemies, ſhall diſcourage and keep them from giving their Aſſiſtance in its Defence? This ſurely all Men, that are ſincerely concerned for the Honour and Intereſt of Religion, and expect to receive the unſpeakable Rewards it propoſes to thoſe that faithfully purſue it, will be aſhamed of. I confeſs to the World, I dare not, I know not how to hope to be Rom. 2 5.

rewarded with Everlaſting Honour and Happineſs hereafter
2. from Him, who *endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame*, if I can't prevail upon my ſelf to ſuffer ill Treatment, to be calumniated, laugh'd at, and contemn'd, in Obedience to his Commands, and for the Good of Souls, *for whom he died*: Nay, I will not ask Pardon of the prophane Crew, the Generation of Scorners, that I tell them yet more plainly, that I hope I had rather bear all the Contempt that their Tongues and Pens can fling upon me for any Aſſiſtance I am enabled, by God's Grace, to give this Cauſe I am repreſenting, (whilſt I continue under the ſame Sentiments of it) which I do expect a ſhare of, and am preparing my ſelf to welcome; nay, to ſuffer Death, if I am called to it, in the Diſcharge of my Duty therein, rather than bear the Reproaches of my own Mind in this World for an Unconcernedneſs for it, and much more than to be diſowned by my Bleſſed Saviour at laſt, and to endure his Everlaſting Diſpleaſure. And without the leave of thoſe unhappy Wretches who would paſs for Wits in theſe days, by ſaying ſuch things as have in all Ages markt thoſe that have been guilty of them with the moſt infamous Characters, and have made them lookt on as Enemies of Mankind, even Monſters in Humane Nature; thoſe Panders for Hell I mean who turn the moſt ſerious and ſacred things into Jeſt and Railery, and who will not therefore, I ſuppoſe, fail to treat with Scorn and Reproach the Endeavours of Reformation, and thoſe that are concerned in them, I muſt remember them, that the Scripture not only tells us that
2 *Pet.* 3. 3. *in the laſt days Scoffers ſhall appear*, and that *Judgments are*
Prov. 19. 29. *prepared for Scorners*, but that *God will laugh Wicked Men*
Prov. 3. 34. *to ſcorn*, particularly, that *he ſcorneth the Scorners*. And as for thoſe that herd among theſe prophane Scoffers, theſe profeſſed Advocates for the Devil's Service, that neglect their Duty, and ſacrifice their Conſciences, only to avoid their Scorn and Contumelies, let me deſire them to conſider, whether they have not reaſon to fear that God will treat them

them with Everlaſting Contempt who for his ſake, or in Obedience to his plain Commands, refuſe to be contemned.

Let us not then, Fellow-Chriſtians, who would be accounted faithful Soldiers of Jeſus Chriſt, *be afraid of the Reproach and Revilings of Men.* Let us conſider, that this Life is the proper Seaſon for Service and Suffering, and the next of Reward and Happineſs. * Let the Lives and Deaths of the Martyrs and Confeſſours of old be much in our Minds. Let us remember that the beſt Chriſtians in all Ages have been derided and contemned, that our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf, who *was rejected and deſpiſed of Men*, hath commanded us *not to be afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do; but to fear him that hath Power to caſt into Hell*; and hath ſaid, that *whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of him, and of his Words, of him alſo ſhall he be aſhamed when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with the holy Angels*; but that *if we are Reviled and Perſecuted for his ſake our Reward ſhall be great in Heaven.* Let us fortifie our ſelves with theſe Conſiderations againſt the moſt violent Oppoſition of the Enemies of Goodneſs, and the dangerous Suggeſtions and ill Examples of formal and lukewarm Chriſtians, and of thoſe who are too often falſly called Friends; let us look on all their Inſinuations, and any Objections whatſoever to the Diſcharge of our Duty in this Undertaking, which we may meet with from the Wiſe and the Wary, as tending to diſcourage us from the hearty Proſecution of it, as Temptations that we are to reſiſt, unleſs they can convince us that we do not act herein as becomes Men and Chriſtians, and good Members of the Community; that this Work is not honourable in its ſelf, deſirable in its Effects, and acceptable to Almighty God, which, I think, they will never do, ſince they cannot prove that the Civil Government ought not to endeavour to puniſh and ſuppreſs Publick Sins, and the open Defiance of Religion, in anſwer to Scripture,

* Romani duces imitentur Camillos, Fabritios, Scipiones; philoſophi proponant Socratem, Ariſtotelem, &c. Nos autem habeamus propoſiti noſtri principes, Paulos, Hilariones, &c. *Hieronymus.*

pture, clear Reaſon, and the general Conſent of Mankind to the contrary.

Laſtly therefore, Let all thoſe who are already ſincerely concerned in this Noble Undertaking, and all others that have any Love to God, any Charity to Man, any Concern for their Country, or Regard to their Poſterity, to engage them in it, conſider, that we have herein the Laws of God and the Nation, the Commands of the King, the Concurrence of a late Repreſentative Body of the Nation, the Prayers of good Men, the Pretences of thoſe that carry but a Form and Profeſſion of Religion, and the Conſciences that are not hardned, even of bad Men, on our ſide; and moreover, the great Succeſs that hath already attended theſe Attempts, to animate and encourage our Zeal and Diligence in it: So that if we acquit our ſelves herein like Men and Chriſtians; if God is on our ſide, we know, *there is*, as *Solomon* ſays, *no Wiſdom, nor Underſtanding, nor Counſel, againſt him*; we need not much fear the Strength or Policy of the World, or the Powers of Darkneſs; we may, with God's Bleſſing, ſee Prophaneneſs and Debauchery every day more and more fly into dark Corners, as Idolatry of old did at the appearance of Chriſtianity, Vice be branded and confounded, Virtue embraced, Religion prevail, *England* flouriſh, and give ſuch an Example as may provoke ſucceeding Ages and other Nations to an Imitation, and give perhaps Occaſion to reform Chriſtendom and Mankind. But what Triumph of Soul, which neither Riches, nor Honours, nor the Fleſh can give, ſuch happy Souls may, Living or Dying, have, who have undergone Shame and Sufferings in the faithful diſcharge of their Duty, and for the Cauſe of God, who have been his Inſtruments in bringing about ſuch bleſſed Effects; nay, in diſcharging their Duty herein, and in other reſpects, ſincerely, tho' Succeſs which is not in our Power, and will not be required of us, ſhould not attend it? And, on the contrary, what ſevere Reflections

Prov. 21. 30.

ctions they may hereafter make on their Behaviour, who, after this Matter is plainly laid before them, and a publick Reformation of Manners ſeems to be put as it were into their hands, will either openly oppoſe, or ſecretly undermine the juſt Endeavours of it, or that will not be prevail'd upon either to concur in the Methods that are already laid, or to engage in any other that they can ſuppoſe may be more effectual for the carrying on a National Reformation, that can contentedly look on and ſee their Fellow-Chriſtians ſuffer in any kind, by their brave Oppoſition to the declared Enemies of God, and the Devil's Kingdom, and the Cauſe of Religion to be injured and depreſſed, and their Country ſo much endangered, for want of their giving their ſeaſonable and zealous Aſſiſtance to it, I will not undertake to deſcribe.

I will only add, That if the Attempts of Reformation, which were began with ſo great Diſadvantage, have born up under ſo many Difficulties, which are carried on by the united Endeavours of ſuch Bodies of Men, in the ſeveral Parts of this City, and are ſpreading through the Cities and Corporations of the Kingdom, and are propagating in thoſe of *Ireland*, who have a Communication with one another, are governed by Methods that have been approved by Perſons of great Wiſdom, and conſummated Judgment, and which have been ſo highly ſucceſsful, ſhould be defeated by the Induſtry and Power, the Number and Intereſt of its Enemies: If, I ſay, we ſhould ſuffer Debauchery and Prophaneneſs to regain their ground, and to carry the Victory, after the Advances that are thus made towards the Suppreſſing of them, the Encouragement we have had from the repeated *Declarations* of the King, and the *Addreſs* of our Repreſentatives in a late Parliament, and the other Encouragements and Advantages I have mentioned for the Carrying of them on to ſo glorious an Iſſue, whether we have not very great reaſon to fear that God may never

again

again put ſuch an Opportunity into our Hands? Or whether, Humanely ſpeaking, it can be thought eaſie to bring the Body of Men together that are now engaged in it, to rally and reaſſume a Baffled Cauſe, wherein they may then think they have made a full and diſmal Experiment of the deſperate Averſion and Oppoſition of this Generation to Reformation, have, if they have acted therein, and in other parts of their Duty, ſincerely, kept the Guilt of publick Wickedneſs from lying on them, and may have delivered their own Souls? Or that there is any probability that this Cauſe will be revived and ſucceſsfully retrieved by thoſe, whom no Arguments will now prevail on, to concur in the preſent Methods, or give any other zealous Aſſiſtance to it? And, laſtly, who is there that believes that there is a Righteous God that governs the World, that will not fear, how ſanguine ſoever ſome Men may be upon the firmneſs of our preſent Peace and Settlement, that notwithſtanding our Councils and Confederacies, we ſhall feel the Effects of the high Diſpleaſure of Almighty God, upon whoſe Bleſſing the Stability of our preſent Peace and outward Proſperity does depend; that *He will be avenged on ſuch a Nation as this?* And if this ſhould prove to be our diſmal Caſe, might it not then be ſaid over us; O ungrateful and rebellious Nation, that wouldeſt ſo provoke infinite Patience and Forbearance, wouldeſt obſtinately refuſe ſo many Offers, contemn ſuch various Methods of Mercy, as if thou had'ſt been deſperately reſolved upon Deſtruction! O *England*! *England*! to what Miſery have thy Sins brought thee! But the Cauſe of Reformation is God's Cauſe, His Providence hath ſeemed to favour the poor Endeavours of it, which are repreſented in theſe Papers, and therefore I hope they will, with His Bleſſing, ſo proſper and prevail, that ſuch a National Reformation may be effected as may prevent His heavy Judgments falling upon us.

Jer. 5. 9.

And

And may Almighty God, who is pleaſed to magnifie his Power in Weakneſs, for this end mercifully direct and ſupport thoſe who are ſincerely engaged in this Glorious Work; give what is ſaid herein agreeable to his Will ſome Succeſs in the furthering of it, and graciouſly pardon any thing in it that may not be acceptable to Him, for His Mercy's Sake in Jeſus Chriſt.

All Glory to GOD.